

Towards a Radical Pedagogy of Post-Dramatic Theatre

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DECLARATION

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ABSTRACT

This research project makes an enquiry into post-dramatic theatre's potential as a counter-apparatus for radical pedagogy. It argues that PDT enables its participants to co-author acts of creative resistance outside of the usual hegemonic modes of theatrical production often prescribed for and expected of young people. *Part One* sets out to explore a range of intersections emerging between concepts of authenticity and post-dramatic theatre through examination of four sites of convergence: realities, bodies, subjectivities and spectators. These: i) reveal post-dramatic theatre's potential to assume critical frames on reality that might provide a foundation for the operation of a radical pedagogy of post-dramatic theatre; ii) deepen appreciation of post-dramatic theatre's potential to enable an experiential, kinaesthetic and critical mode of being that facilitates immediate and embodied participation in radical pedagogic processes; and iii) clarify why concepts of subjectivation and representation might become key concerns of a radical pedagogy of PDT. The findings from this discussion are then mobilised in *Part Two* within a series of first-hand spectator accounts of examples of post-dramatic theatre that place children and teenagers at their core – namely, Victoria's *üBUNG* (2003), Rimini Protokoll's *Airport Kids* (2008), Ontroerend Goed's *Once and For All We're Going to Tell You Who We Are So Shut Up and Listen* (2008), Victoria's *That Night Follows Day* (2009), Ontroerend Goed's *Teenage Riot* (2010), Mammalian Diving Reflex's *Haircuts by Children* (2010), Campo/Gob Squad's *Before Your Very Eyes* (2012), Ontroerend Goed's *All That is Wrong* (2013) and Boris Charmatz's *L'Enfant* (2014). On one hand, these accounts provide underpinning field research aiming to deepen response to the question of how notions of authenticity might inform the practice of post-dramatic theatre and, additionally, they are examined to identify what they might offer to the investigation of PDT as an apparatus for radical pedagogy. Finally, from a first-hand perspective situated within the messy terrain of performance making, *Part Three* offers an account of an emergent methodology designed to exploit post-dramatic theatre as an apparatus for radical pedagogy *in practice*. This makes specific reference to three performance works that I have made with young people: *All Straight in a Line or Wild Like Thorns* (2012), *Think of Me Sometime* (2013) and *Music to Be Murdered By* (2014). This discussion culminates in *Thirteen Theses on PDT as a Counter-Apparatus for Radical Pedagogy* which provides a manifesto for practice, along with *Notes for a Teacher Maker Towards the Realisation of a Radical Pedagogy of PDT* which offers an overview of a selection of strategies and tactics used in the making of the works explored in Part Three. Both are intended as transferable frameworks for others to instigate their own radical pedagogic approaches.

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INTRODUCTION

This project makes enquiry into post-dramatic theatre's potential as a counter-apparatus for radical pedagogy. It explores a range of intersections emerging between concepts of authenticity and post-dramatic theatre, which are then made application of within a series of first-hand spectator accounts of examples of post-dramatic theatre performed by young people. It draws on the discourse of radical pedagogy in exploring potential approaches to mobilising post-dramatic theatre as an innovative counter-apparatus for radical pedagogy in practice.

This introductory section starts out with a preliminary account of a performance work that galvanised my specific interest in the field: Ghent-based Victoria's

production of *Bernadetje* which was presented at Aberystwyth Arts Centre in 1997 in association with The Centre for Performance Research.¹ My depiction of this work introduces a mode of narration that is employed throughout Part Two – the situated first-person spectator account – which makes particular emphasis of the ability of post-dramatic theatre with young people to shift concerns of subject formation to the adult spectator in the auditorium. My account of *Bernadetje* introduces themes that have importance later on in the project – notably, the act of “substituting signs of the real for the real itself” (Baudrillard 1983: 146), the enforced interpellation of the adult spectator, depictions of adult responsibility in relation to the figure of the child, and the way in which this work accesses the dishevelled, chaotic and at times shameless vibrancy of the adolescent.

Title: *Bernadetje* by Victoria (Arne Sierens and Alain Platel)²
Location: Theatr y Werin, Aberystwyth Arts Centre³
Who: Nine children and teenagers aged between 9 and 17, and two adults
When: October 1997

Magnificent classical music plays as ecclesiastical light reaches through the dodgem track’s structure. A dodgem car occupied by three young performers orbits the space; more passengers joining with each revolve. Its headlights cut through the semi-darkness and a small child, dressed in white, observes from the safety of the ledge. Exquisite and ever-shifting images are fashioned by bodies on the moving dodgem in shifting tableaux of biblical and epic proportion. A young performer emerges on the

¹ Later touring to Newcastle, London and Glasgow.

² The description of this work is not the result of a particularly vivid memory, but based instead upon a more recent viewing of the performance on DVD, held by the Centre for Performance Research.

³ *Bernadetje* was the second piece of a trilogy by Arne Sierens and Alain Platel, which included *Moder en Kind* (1995) and *Allemaal Indiaan* (1999).

pole at the back of the dodgem in mirror image of the Crucifixion. The mother figure tries to grab the small child in white who resists and escapes. Euphoric teenage bodies are dragged across the floor and spun through the space by the ever-increasing impetus of the rotating dodgem car. Fired by its steadily increasing momentum, bodies wrap around each other; repeatedly lifted high into the air and dropped delicately onto the floor. After some time, the soundtrack ceases and is replaced by silence. The dodgem car subsequently comes to a standstill and the fairground lights and “ Lourdes ” sign at the back of the stage illuminate. Exhausted and intertwined, these young performers seem deeply connected in their enactment of this moment of delicate beauty. Like the figures from Flemish artist Rogier van der Weyden’s *The Descent from the Cross* (c.1435), they lay draped over the dodgem car as if a transcendent peacefulness has been acquired.

Both Sierens and Platel had grown up near Oostaker in Ghent, where there exists a fairground adjacent to a reproduction of the grotto at Lourdes where a fourteen-year-old Bernadette was reputedly witness to visions of the Virgin Mary.⁴ The on-stage juxtaposition of fairground setting and “ Lourdes ” sign combine here to create an antithetical territory in which questions and conflicts are subsequently generated: “ rendering it a ‘ modern version ’ of the story of Bernadette of Lourdes ” (Kear 2006: 109). Lourdes, as a site of Christian pilgrimage, is juxtaposed here against the weekend/ecstasy milieu of the late nineties that these young performers seem to tap into; offering an escape from the humdrumness of daily life, with all its promises of attaining spirituality, communality and peace. Through the act of “ substituting signs of the real for the real itself ” (Baudrillard 1983: 146), these young people become

⁴ www.artangel.org.uk/project/bernadette

engrossed in an inward looking, illusory lifestyle - experiencing the emotional roller-coaster of falling in love, having their hearts broken, experiencing conflict, “looking forward to the next opportunity to gush, addicted to love, in love with...nothing” (Reynolds 1997: 89). And during all this there is a small girl, dressed in white, looking very much like Bernadette Soubirous from Lourdes who, at least once during the performance, has a vision that no one even bothers noticing.

Prince plays: / *This is it / It's time for you to go to the wire / You will hit / Cuz you got the burnin desire / It's your time (time) / You got the horn so why don't you blow it / Cream / Get on top / Cream / U will cop / Cream / Don't you stop / Cream / Sh-boogie bop* / An adolescent boy's topless torso writhes and twists as he leaps onto the passing dodgems; a display of teenage male prowess, desperate to leave an impression upon anyone who might be observing. He jumps dangerously from car to car, all the time re-enacting and fully embodying Prince's highly sexualised choreography / *Ure so good / Baby there ain't nobody better (ain't nobody better) / So u should / Never, ever go by the letter (never ever) / Ure so cool (cool) / Everything u do is success / Makes the rules (rules) / Then break them all cuz u are the best / Yes u are / Cream / Get on top / Cream / U will cop / Cream / Don't u stop / Cream / Sh-boogie bop* / The dodgems continue to orbit the space. A teenage girl dances towards the spectators SR, and SL the mother figure in the white Afghan coat does the same; two generations sharing the same moment interconnected by identical insecurities and means of escape. An air of mayhem and exhilaration prevails; each on-stage figure completely absorbed in their own world / *Come on / Cream / Get on top / Cream / U will cop / Cream / Don't u ever stop / Cream / Sh-boogie bop / Cream / Cream / Cream / Sh-boogie bop / Cream / Cream / Right there / Cream / Don't u stop / Cream / Sh-boogie bop / Boogie* /

Emerging from this on-stage bedlam a catwalk of bodies forms, centre stage, parading towards the spectators. These young people are on exhibition and, as they come forward and parody the posture of professional models, I become an unsuspecting and passively resistant voyeur to their behaviours. Once downstage, they unbutton their shirts and expose their torsos, turning and shaking their backsides; ruthlessly demanding that they be objectified as sexual objects. I struggle intensely with their invitation but their behaviour is relentless. Other dodgems start circling as the young performers continue to desperately vie for spectator attention. As they come forward, two teenage boys briefly wrap their heads in their shirts in an image that might draw on Belgian artist Magritte's *The Lovers* (1928). As spectator attention is directed onto their naked torsos, it is easier perhaps to ensure objectification is taking place when there is no face with which to identify. In this singular moment, I read objectification, teenage sexual frustration, perhaps even a hint of more sinister sadomasochist tendencies. The young performers' lack of reciprocal gaze and status as children suggests that they have no control over the image that they present or how it is read, and my own subjectivity instead becomes emphasised as I am left free to negotiate my own interpretations and objectify these subjects. There is no specific framing of this action to fix down specific meaning and, left to my own shifting interpretations, I become fully implicated within this purposefully problematic territory.⁵

The way in which spectator responsibility is incited here in relation to the inclusion of the figure of the child is discussed by Kear in terms of how the structural relations of the viewing contract interpellates its spectators "as agents of a disturbingly

⁵ Unlike, for example, in Sally Mann's contentious photograph of her son, *Popsicle Drips* (1985), where the spectator gaze is firmly framed as a maternal one.

paedophilic gaze” (2006: 110). ⁶ Like at the start of Bausch’s *Kontakthof*, these performers present themselves for inspection, but here there is not the same subtlety of intention; these adolescents are learning the power of the sexuality of their bodies and are putting it to direct use. They become increasingly lost in their sweaty athletic world, often only seeming aware of us when they perform at the front of the stage on a ledge dividing dodgem track and auditorium that demarcates a line between two antithetical worlds. The choreography of the work is generally that of the nightclub, often not much more, and that feel of the nightclub is strewn out into the auditorium as thumping bass beats pulse through the theatre building; tapping into that wild, chaotic and at times lustful energy of the teenager in a way that the formality of many of Victoria’s later works with children and teenagers does not allow - where they are subjected instead to formal societal structures which diligently delimit and quash their on-stage behaviours.

Bernadetje was invigorating work, viscerally and intellectually demanding, and my experience of being its spectator has certainly lingered. It was performed nearly a decade prior to the publication of the English translation of Lehmann’s *Postdramatic Theatre* (2006) and my journal notes of the time simply locate it in opposition to dramatic works with young people that I was at that point more accustomed to making and spectating. This was a performance theatre where the act of spectating seemed fully assimilated into the making process - implicating the adults watching the young people before them on what mostly seemed to be the young people’s terms.

⁶ Kear scrutinises this moment and poses the ‘burning question’: “To what extent were the adolescent actors aware of what it was they were doing? Did they have ownership of the mise-en-scene or was it subject to a calculated and controlling directorial strategy? In short, what were the relations of authorship and agency at play within the compositional process of this company?” (2006: 110-111). This concern is in many ways the very challenge of Part Three of this project which seeks to implement a radical pedagogy of post-dramatic theatre in which its young participants have a knowingness and degree of agency as to how their bodies are read within the theatrical frame.



Figure 1: *Bernadetje*. (Kurt Van der Elst)

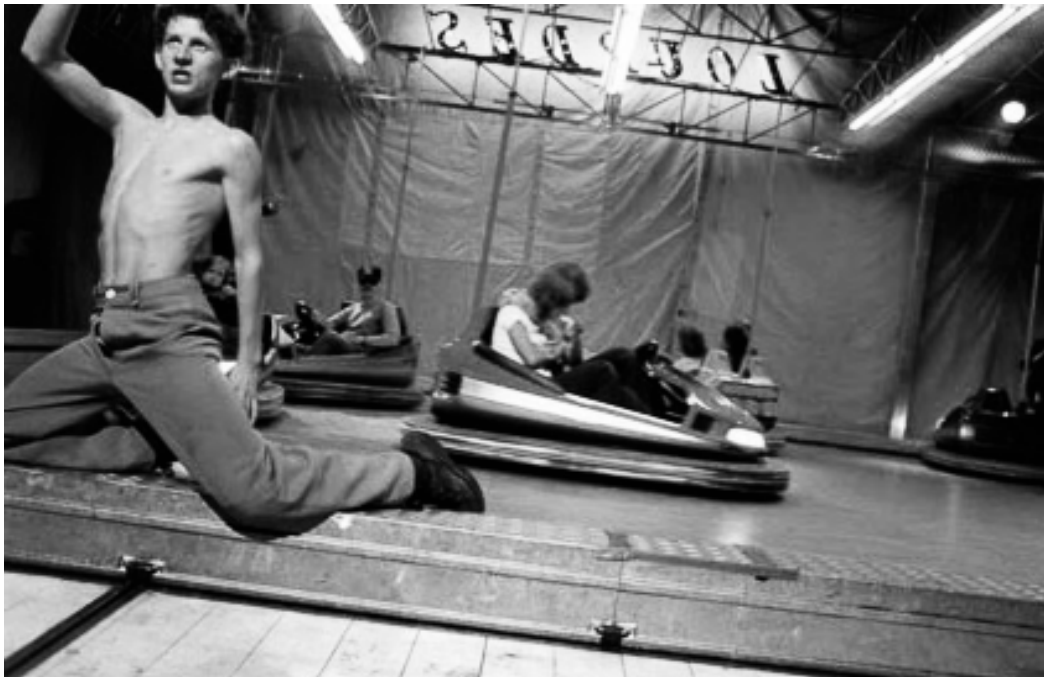


Figure 2: *Bernadetje*. (Kurt Van der Elst)

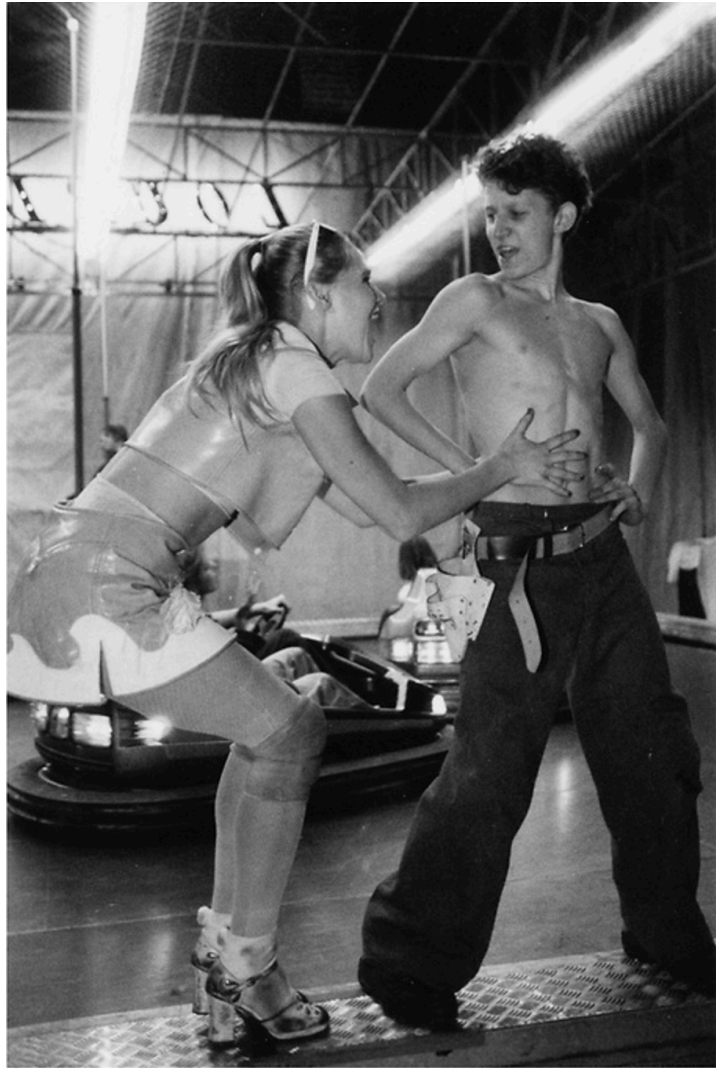


Figure 3: *Bernadetje*. (Kurt Van der Elst)

CRITICAL CONTEXT

In many ways, my encounter with *Bernadetje* some twenty years ago provided the motivational imperative for this project. It ignited an ongoing fascination as to how the form, content and aesthetic of a post-dramatic theatre performed by children and teenagers could be transposed to the job of pedagogy within an educational institution. This project formalises that concern into a three-pronged enquiry that i) explores how notions of authenticity might inform the practice of PDT,⁷ specifically in application to a range of examples of PDT performed by young people. In its turn towards pedagogy, the project then ii) considers how these first-hand spectator accounts of examples of PDT performed by young people might inform the investigation of PDT as an apparatus for radical pedagogy. Finally, it asks: iii) how might PDT be mobilised as an apparatus for radical pedagogy *in practice*? These three central questions are investigated in a largely chronological order throughout the three proceeding components of this project: *Part One: Intersections*; *Part Two: Creative Works*; and *Part Three: PDT as a Counter-Apparatus for Radical Pedagogy in Practice*.

In providing an overview of the critical context of this project, I suggest that PDT can provide an innovative counter-apparatus for radical pedagogy because of the ways in which it potentially locates the subject in dynamic tension with the apparatuses of everyday that have on-going influence on processes of subjectivation.⁸ I take time here to establish some of the ways in which the discourse of authenticity is mobilised throughout the project to uncover common ground between concepts of PDT and

⁷ The abbreviation PDT is used throughout the remainder of this thesis to replace post-dramatic theatre.

⁸ I use the term 'subjectivation' to depict the processes by which one becomes a subject. This draws on Foucault's understanding of subjectivation which he defines as "the process by which one obtains the constitution of a subject, or more exactly, of a subjectivity, which is obviously only one of the given possibilities for organising self-consciousness" (Lotringer 1996: 472).

radical pedagogy. The concept of authenticity is depicted here as an entirely cultural construct relating specifically to concepts of subjectivity and reality. Within the context of subjectivity, two frameworks surface as significant to the trajectory of the project, namely i) Foucault's depiction of the interrelationship between the subject and power, and ii) the portrayal of fluid, dynamic and multiple subjectivities as epitomised by Deleuze and Guattari. Archetypes of unified and stable subjectivity are regarded as redundant; concepts of subjectivity favoured instead to be experienced as uncertainty, fragmentation, contradiction and unresolvedness – providing a productive means to re-evaluate representations of the self within both PDT and radical pedagogic processes. Additionally, readings of the discourse of authenticity as they relate to ideals of realness, truthfulness and validity; as well as its antonyms like simulation, inauthenticity and counterfeitness, become critical to the project's trajectory.

In introducing the notion of radical pedagogy, I take time to unravel the complex etymology of the term 'radical,' noting its usage within contemporary performance research and philosophy. Concepts relating to critical pedagogy provide a starting point for thinking about radical pedagogic processes as they might manifest themselves in processes of making PDT – particularly Freire's approach to achieving new understandings of reality in processes of 'authentic thinking' which attempt to comprehend and critique reality (1996). Additionally, I consider Giroux's notion of a border pedagogy that interrogates and celebrates the partiality of subjectivity: potentially revealing how subjectivities are produced historically and socially and how fragile concepts of identity actually are (1991). Beyond the field of critical pedagogy, the project also draws on post-structuralist and post-anarchist approaches to pedagogy. I argue that these offer participants access to intellectual tools for self-determination - making transparent the processes of how we learn to be subjects and how subjects

become implicated within power structures.

POST-DRAMATIC THEATRE

PDT is by now a familiar and well-established construct, having been in circulation for over a decade since the arrival of Lehmann's *Postdramatic Theatre* (in German in 1999 and in English in 2006). Lehmann's account of PDT provides the inevitable starting point for my investigations, articulating as it does the intricate relationship between drama and the 'no longer dramatic' (2006:1) forms of theatre that have emerged since the 1970s; categorising a then emerging paradigm in terms of an aesthetics of space, time, body, media and text. In her introduction to the English translation of the text, Jürs-Munby depicts Lehmann's quest to develop a language able to articulate new theatre forms that had previously been overlooked through what she deems as a misguided focus upon concepts like the post-modern, the contemporary experimental or the contemporary alternative (1).

However, in acknowledging the resonance of facets of post-structural and post-modern thinking within concepts of PDT, she unpacks the intricate interrelationship between PDT and post-modernism: making particular emphasis of Lyotard's portrayal of the post-modern condition as an "incredulity toward metanarratives" (1979: xxiv) as being fundamental to understanding post-dramatic form. Whilst the application of post-structural and post-modern discourse to theatrical form may have sparked some insightful investigation,⁹ the term post-modern (with its source originating outside of theatre and performance) should be

⁹ Nick Kaye's *Postmodernism and Performance* (1994) is one such example, which offers a depiction of postmodernism in art, architecture, music and performance.

regarded as problematic in this context and, she argues, should always be employed with caution (14). Even so, it cannot be denied that typical depictions of post-modern art for example might, at least at face value, seem to replicate many of the features of PDT:

the deletion of the boundary between art and everyday life; the collapse of the hierarchical distinction between élite and popular culture; a stylistic eclecticism and the mixing of codes. There is parody, pastiche, irony and playfulness [...] emphasis[ing] not depth but surface. [...] the decline of the originality and genius view of the artistic producer has been replaced by the assumption that art can only be repetitious. [...] a shift of emphasis from content to form or style; a transformation of reality into images; the fragmentation of time into a series of perpetual presents [...], continual references to eclecticism, reflexivity, self-referentiality, quotation, artifice, randomness, anarchy, fragmentation, pastiche and allegory [...] a move to 'textualize' everything: history, philosophy, jurisprudence, sociology, and other disciplines are treated as so many optional 'kinds of writing' or discourses.

(Sarup 1993: 132)

Despite evident replication of facets of the post-modern, employing the operative term 'post-dramatic' necessitates specific inquiry as it provides an indispensable "missing link" by tracing a trajectory that gathers traits from disparate works from within theatre aesthetics to construct a perspective on theatre away from the dominant paradigm of the dramatic (Jürs-Munby: 14). The question, in many ways, is what can PDT specifically do that is beyond the critical realm of the post-modern?

Pavis indicates that despite deserving credit for the systemisation of PDT, Lehmann was never responsible for coming up with the term 'post-dramatic.'¹⁰ He

¹⁰ He identifies instead Andrej Wirth as having already mobilised the idea of a "spoken theatre (that) had lost its monopoly on the use of post-dramatic forms of sound mixing, spoken opera, and dance theatre" (2012:1). In examining the origins of the term, Pavis also pinpoints Schechner's much earlier "superficial and journalistic" use of the terms "post-dramatic" and "posthumanist" in his assertion of the disappearance of the avant-garde in *The End of Humanism* (1979).

argues that the historical evolution of PDT coincides with distinct changes in theatrical methodology between 1968 and 1980 marked by the end of dramaturgical analyses inspired by Brecht, the end of semiological imperialism, and the beginning of a post-structuralist era (2012: 6). Lehmann's own version of the prehistory of PDT is predicated on the dramatic through processes of "self-reflection, decomposition and separation of the elements of dramatic theatre" (2006: 59); leading its reader from nineteenth century theatre via the historical avant-garde and the neo-avant-garde of the 1950s and 1960s, to the post-dramatic forms to be found at the end of the Twentieth and beginning of the Twenty-First centuries.

Key to the emergence of PDT, argues Lehmann, has been a marked shift in our dominant mode of perception; an influx of new technologies that have modified our dominant mode of perception resulting in the replacement of a previously "linear-successive mode" with the "simultaneous and multi-perspectival" (17). This new mode of perception might be regarded as more superficial, yet more comprehensive, demoting the status of a deeper one whose primary model was usually the reading of literary texts (16). Subsequently, reading and its associated theatrical forms become at risk of losing their status when faced with the highly competitive and more profitable circulation of moving images (16). Lehmann argues that the subsequent pressure created by the attraction of the "united forces of speed and surface" (16) have occasioned a pressing need for theatrical discourse to emancipate itself from literary discourse. Schechner makes similar claims for the explosion of "multiple literacies": as people have become increasingly "body literate," "aurally literate," and "visually literate," he identifies a development in performative "hypertext" communications combining words, sounds and other various shorthand that have transformed the idea of what it means to be literate (2008: 4-5).

In Lehmann's chapter 'Panorama of Postdramatic Theatre' (68-133) he attempts a systematisation of the aesthetic palette of PDT with a helpful synopsis of theatrical signs that are envisioned as a proposal for criteria and categories of description; in Lehmann's own words, it is intended "not as a checklist but a companion for the viewing experience" (82). Here, he sets out to employ the frame of theatre semiotics and then moves towards "figurations of self-cancellation of meaning" (82), providing observations of performance work and identification of points of commonality that come to include: the retreat of synthesis (82), the use of dream images (83), synaesthesia (84), parataxis/non-hierarchy (86), the use of simultaneity (87), play with the density of signs (89), musicalization (91), visual dramaturgy (93), play with warmth and coldness (95), physicality (95), irruption of the real (99), performance as event (104), cinematographic theatre (114), hypernaturalisation (115), cool fun (118), shared space (122), choral theatre (129) and heterogeneity (132).

The acknowledgment of the resonance of facets of post-structural thinking within constructs of PDT opens up a critical territory in which it is possible to begin to explore processes that disturb and dismantle the foundations of any text that is engaged with. What PDT specifically does that is beyond the realm of simply being a postmodern theatre is to offer a site of radically deconstructive intent beyond its stylistic traits. Whilst Lehmann's systemisation of PDT does on one hand offer a wide aesthetic palette, it also offers a specific means and criteria to articulate the making, spectating, critiquing and theorising of a mode of performance that is not dominated by the literary text. The specific way in which PDT sets out to emancipate itself from literary discourse offers a vehicle with which to dismantle notions of unity and hierarchy, whilst generating critical frames on reality.

APPARATUS

As a means of progressing Lehmann's depiction of PDT, I return throughout this project to the idea of PDT having potentiality as an apparatus for radical pedagogy - the term 'apparatus' bringing with it a specific nuance that requires further consideration prior to any pedagogical mobilisation. Agamben pinpoints the word as a pivotal technical term employed in the strategy of Foucault's thought: denoting a network between elements, a concrete strategic function that is always located within a power relation and appearing at the intersection of power relations and relations of knowledge (2009: 1-3). Agamben expands on Foucault's notion of the apparatus to include: "literally anything that has in some way the capacity to capture, orient, determine, intercept, model, control, or secure the gestures, behaviours, opinions, or discourses of living beings" (14). He offers the idea that the subject is always a consequence of the "relentless fight between living beings and apparatuses" - the growth of apparatuses in contemporary society directly corresponding to a proliferation in processes of subjectivation; our current phase of capitalist development being "a massive accumulation and proliferation of apparatuses" (15). His implication is that the subject is cornered in a precarious relation with capitalism that sets out to control and define every single aspect of its existence.

If this project is to set out to mobilise the idea of PDT as an apparatus for radical pedagogy, it is perhaps more alluring and coherent in this context to consider its potential instead as a counter-apparatus providing appropriate terrain for "the relentless fight between living beings and apparatuses." Agamben offers the following guidance for confronting the apparatuses with which we are faced:

“What we are looking for is neither simply to destroy them nor, as some naively suggest, to use them in the correct way” (15), but to liberate that “which remains captured and separated by means of apparatuses, in order to bring it back to a possible common use” (17). This sense of regaining that which has previously been captured by apparatuses focuses largely on concepts of subjectivity. He argues that the apparatuses of contemporary society do not produce the subject as such, but instead set out to actively desubjectivate:

A desubjectifying moment is certainly implicit in every process of subjectivation...what we are now witnessing is that processes of subjectivation and processes of desubjectivation seem to become reciprocally indifferent, and so they do not give rise to the recomposition as a new subject.

(20-21)

The de-subjectifying forces of contemporary apparatuses foster emergence of the docile body,¹¹ which ultimately fosters further advancement and reinforcement of a neoliberal climate.¹² Reclaiming that which the apparatuses of contemporary society have apprehended, argues Agamben, requires most importantly that the subject has access to making intervention into their own processes of de-subjectivation.

It is here that PDT might play a critical role by providing a counter-apparatus for radical pedagogy that on one hand does encourage desecration, sacrilege, irreverence and debasement of the apparatuses within which we find ourselves; but also offers productive and supportive terrain within which the subject can explore and inhabit rather more unorthodox and substitute forms/means of subjectivity that set out

¹¹ I refer here to Foucault’s use of the term docile when he depicts the body submitting to a regime of being subjected, used, transformed and improved (136: 1977)

¹² I return throughout this project to the concept of neoliberalism in relation to pedagogy, drawing largely on Giroux’s definition as a “theater of cruelty and mode of public pedagogy,” “a form of economic Darwinism [that] attempts to undermine all forms of solidarity capable of challenging market-driven values and social relations, promoting the virtues of an unbridled individualism almost pathological in its disdain for community, social responsibility, public values and the public good” (2014:2).

to resist de-subjectivating forces. PDT as a counter-apparatus for radical pedagogy becomes a vehicle for resistance to challenge and dismantle perceived and inherited constructs of unity, subjectivity and representation. In considering the idea of PDT as a counter-apparatus for radical pedagogy, it is key to acknowledge traces of post-structural thinking within its scope and definition as this helps to uncover a critical territory in which it becomes possible to explore processes that examine how knowledge is produced, that provide critique of unity and hierarchy, and foster critical frames on reality.

AUTHENTICITY

Subjectivity

Jay makes the following observations on the etymology of the term ‘authenticity’:

Authenticity (Authentizität), derived from the Greek *autos*, or “self,” and *hentes*, or “prepared,” implies something done by one’s own hand and thus a reliable guarantee of quality. In German, the more common word is *Eigentlichkeit*, whose roots is in *eigen*, the perfect participle of an archaic verb meaning “have” or “possess.” As a result, the substantive suggests proprietary ownership, including of the self.
(2006: 17)

The prevailing definition that Jay implies here suggests the pursuit of a personal trajectory culminating in the formation of authentic self. A depiction of authenticity from the perspective of subjectivity encapsulates an entire metamorphosis of the

subject from pre-modern foundations ¹³ through to an eventual emergence in fragmented post-modern form.

Hall accounts for the evolution of Western subjectivity in terms of several phases loosely marked by emergence of an Enlightenment subject, a sociological subject and, finally, a post-modern subject (2004: 597). The Enlightenment subject is generally perceived as a centred, fixed and unified individual consisting of an: “inner core, which emerged when first born, and unfolded with it, whilst remaining the same – continuous or identical – with itself – throughout the individual’s existence” (Hall 1996: 597). Whilst Enlightenment accounts of the subject variously link ideas of authenticity to the concept of a pre-existing essence; post-structural and post-modern variations subsequently render ideas of ‘authentic being’ as entirely problematic because of a crisis of identity “undermining the frameworks which gave individuals stable anchorage in the social world” (Hall 1996: 596).

Within this latter frame, depictions of unified and stable identities become largely redundant: the concept of subjectivity shifting to be experienced instead as uncertainty, fragmentation, contradiction and unresolvedness. Two particular

¹³ Pre-modern notions of the self are marked by Socrates’ “Know thyself” – a statement not implying inward scrutiny of the self, but locating the individual within a wider cosmic network: “a place within the scheme of things – who you are is laid out in advance and failing to comply is bad” (Guignon 1995:13). A more theocentric view of the self emerges in St Augustine’s *Confessions* (1970) where emphasis shifts to looking inwards to get closer to God. An emerging modern worldview, by contrast, comes to regard the self as a knowing, objective and controlling subject positioned at the centre of the universe. Within this modern world view surfaces two antithetical notions of existence: a scientific one led by reason where nature is viewed as something to be dominated, against which Romanticism was to provide appropriate resistance with its emphasis upon getting in touch with who we really are and “the blossoming of the creative individual” (Guignon 1995: 78-79). With this, Western society inherits the distinct artificial vs. natural binary which continues to have impact upon the way in which we think about and structure our everyday lives. The inextricable distinction between outward show and inner reality becomes “the master dichotomy” (81); as modern identity emerges as both essential and dualistic, regarding the inner self as authentic, consistent, innocent and child-like, whilst outer identity is regarded as potentially inauthentic, changeable, hardened and artificial. Descartes identified this dualistic distinction of the immaterial mind from the body in his reasoning *Cogito ergo sum* (“I think, therefore I am”), the act of thinking implying that there must be an ‘I’ engaged in the activity, so providing an adage from which all other truths can then be figured out.

frameworks for approaching subjectivity are significant to this project's trajectory: i) Foucault's depiction of the interrelationship between the subject and power which Hall identifies as having made an extremely significant contribution to the depiction of de-centered and subsequently contradictory, unfinished and fragmented identities associated with the post-modern subject (606-611), and ii) the portrayal of fluid, dynamic and multiple subjectivities as exemplified by the ideas of Deleuze and Guattari.

Foucault sets out to oppose the existence of any kind of authentic self, or what he at one point refers to as the "Californian cult of the self" (2002: 387), instead making repeated calls to: "dispense with the constituent subject, and to get rid of the subject itself, that's to say, to arrive at an analysis which can account for the constitution of the subject within a historical framework"¹⁴ (2000: 117). In his various accounts of the formation of subjectivity, Foucault specifically foregrounds the power mechanisms that are employed independently to the subject. He depicts power not as a 'thing' or 'capacity' that can be owned, but something that instead exists as a dynamic relation between individuals and groups and that occurs only when it is employed; institutions and governments being simply the manifestation of complex sets of power relations existing at all levels of the social body (O'Farrell 2005: 96). For Foucault, power is a: "multiple and mobile field of force relations where far-reaching, but never completely stable effects of domination are produced" (1990: 102). Power is always relational and always has dependency; it is not something that can ever be attained or seized. It never has a source or core, nor do subjects ever possess it: "power is a

¹⁴ However, it should be noted that he never actually calls for a conclusive "death" of the subject: "It would be wrong to say that the soul is an illusion, or an ideological effect. On the contrary, it exists, it has a reality" (1978: 29).

structural activity for which subjects are anonymous conduits or by-products” (Best & Kellner 1991: 52).

Crucially, Foucault advocates that resistance to power relations is always an inevitability: “Where there is power, there is resistance, and yet, or rather consequently, this resistance is never in a position of exteriority in relation to power” (1978: 95). Resistance always emerges from within power relations; power both requires and produces resistance to ensure its successful operation. Best & Kellner (52) suggest that a distinct optimism emerges from Foucault’s belief in the existence and vulnerability of power in relation to resistance: “as soon as there is a power relation, there is a possibility of resistance. We can never be ensnared by power: we can always modify its grip in indeterminate conditions and according to a precise strategy” (Foucault 1988b: 123).

Whilst Foucault’s emphasis initially focuses on ways in which the subject can be classified, disciplined and normalised, there is a later change in emphasis from ‘technologies of domination’ to ‘technologies of self’: from examining how subjects are transformed by others to exploring ways in which they might transform themselves. In pursuing this, he suggests:

Maybe the target nowadays is not discovering what we are but to refuse what we are. We have to promote new forms of subjectivity through the refusal of this kind of individuality that has been imposed on us for several centuries.

(1994: 336)

Whilst he might never seem to offer any cohesive idea as to what shape these alternative forms of subjectivity might take, nor predicts any utopian moment of full self-knowledge or self-empowerment (Hall 2004: 94), what Foucault does do is to make a productive call to critically examine inherited templates of subjectivity to instigate possibilities for discovering previously unexplored forms of subjectivity in the

future. According to Mansfield, if power/knowledge operates at the level of the subject, then it is at the level of the subject that it will be most effectively resisted through:

dynamic self-creation, an experimental expansion of the possibilities of subjectivity in open defiance of the modes of being that are being laid down for us constantly in every moment of our day to day lives. This is where the dynamic and creative act of self-creation emerges - in exploding or remodelling the fiction of subjectivity as a subversion of the demands power places on us.

(2000: 63-64)

When Foucault makes the call to ‘create ourselves as a work of art’ (1982: 237) he implies that dynamic self-creation is a radically creative process and not merely a matter of external aesthetics – it is about not accepting the idea of the self as a given and creatively forming/transforming one’s being. The processes of self-definition that he depicts are only possible from within power relations; subjects are not simply docile bodies but need to actively refuse, adopt and alter the forms of being a subject to explore alternative opportunities for modes of being, new experiences, pleasures, and relationships (Oksala 2007: 99).

Post-modern and post-structural depictions of the subject tend to align concepts of authenticity alongside the deconstruction and absence of any kind of stable, essential or permanent identity – promoting instead an ability to assume various identities at different times that are not unified around restrictive, constructed ideas of a coherent self. As systems of meaning and cultural representation rapidly shift and multiply, we become increasingly confronted by a disorientating, fleeting multiplicity of possible identities, any one of which we can assume at any time – at least temporarily (Hall 1990: 598).¹⁵ This shifting landscape of identity renders the idea of the unified, fixed and coherent *a priori* self as a rather archaic, if not quaint, notion that has been

¹⁵ Indeed, my own subject position within the three main components of this project purposefully toys with this idea.

corroded and entirely fragmented by the impact of the annihilation of the meta-narratives. This portrayal of subjectivity as fluid, dynamic and multiple is perhaps best epitomised by Deleuze and Guattari's depiction of the self as a meeting point for: "infinite and random impulses, and flows (lines of flight and mechanic assemblages) that overlap and intercut each other" (Mansfield 2000: 136). When those impulses and flows coincide, they do so in transitory and generative ways, repeatedly drawing on the image of the rhizome: a root system encouraging non-hierarchical and multiple entry and exit points that when severed always regenerate elsewhere. Throughout Deleuze and Guattari's writing, the rhizome becomes a transferable model of and for the heterogeneous that depicts the disorderly intersections and associations of disconnected impulses and forces. The subject visualised through the lens of the rhizome becomes a consequence of all its interconnections, shifting interrelationships and unstable assemblages; all of which are formed in pursuit of desire.

For Deleuze and Guattari, desire is not based upon a notion of lack as with Lacan's concept, but is instead regarded as a real productive and generative force. Desire is always both a driver and circuit breaker within the wider circuit of machines to which it is interconnected. Rather like Foucault's concept of power, desire for Deleuze and Guattari is always productive in nature - functioning not in the pursuit of some lost object that would ultimately complete it, but instead seeking out ever new connections and instantiations (Best & Kellner 1991: 86). In depicting the flow of desire, there is never a starting point or culmination of its process; flow is always interrupted and then subsequently transformed, for: "Desiring-machines work only when they break down, and by continually breaking down" (Deleuze & Guattari 2004: 8). The concept provides a distinct alternative to Foucault's depiction of subjectivity in relation to the power/knowledge dynamic by offering instead a manifestation of

subjectivity as a system of machines operating as productive interruptions to the fluidity of flow. When the notion of the subject is interchanged for the idea of an interconnected machine, there is a marked shift from a prior focus on humanist notions of subjectivity, to one in which the individual now becomes an interdependent post-human mechanism. Individual machines may well give an illusion of the existence of beginnings and endings to flow but individual subjectivity is always to be regarded as a 'becoming' within the larger picture.

Real

Throughout this project there is additionally recurring application of ideas of authenticity as they specifically relate to ideals of realness, truthfulness, and validity; as well as to its antonyms - simulation, inauthenticity and counterfeitness. Perhaps one of the clearest frameworks for thinking about originality and genuineness comes from Benjamin in his brief history of the technological reproduction of art,¹⁶ arguing that even within the most perfect reproduction there is one thing that always stands out: "the here and now of the work of art - its unique existence in the place where it is at this moment" (2008: 5). For Benjamin, genuineness always exists beyond technological reproducibility since the resulting artefact is never able to maintain the full authority of the original. Benjamin captures all that cannot be encapsulated by reproduction as the

¹⁶ His account includes the Greeks use of casting and embossing, the introduction of lithography and through to the early 1900s when technological reproduction becomes an artistic mode of procedure in itself.

aura of the original.¹⁷

Trilling, like Benjamin before him, also relates the concept of authenticity to the idea of the genuine article, arguing that:

its provenance is the museum, where persons expert in such matters test whether objects of art are what they appear to be or are claimed to be, and therefore worth the price that is asked for them – or, if this has already been paid, worth the admiration they are being given.
(1974: 93)

Meanwhile, Handler identifies authenticity as a cultural construct specifically belonging to the modern Western world and involving a quest “for the unspoiled, pristine, genuine, untouched” (1986: 2). However, for Adorno the very idea of authenticity exists only as “a social disease” which he sets “out to exterminate” (Stahl 1975: 489). Adorno argues that the jargon of authenticity is found in abundance in every walk of life; the effectiveness of its infectious spread being down to the fact that “it posits its message automatically, through its mere nature” (2003: 3). He identifies that without any consideration of objective content, the jargon of authenticity “moulds thought” with the effect that “the authority of the absolute is overthrown by absolutized authority” (2003: 3). Adorno focuses on the use of key terms that each embody the pretence of human emotion within an aura of authenticity - for example, in scrutinising the phrases “existential,” “in the decision,” “commission,” “appeal,” “encounter,” “genuine dialogue,” “statement,” and “concern” (3), he illustrates how human cognition

¹⁷ Taking this idea a little further, Berger in *Ways of Seeing* (1972), provides an account of the celebrity artwork through analysis of the authentic presence of the original. His example is Leonardo da Vinci’s much reproduced *Virgin of the Rocks* displayed in London’s National Gallery. When looking at the original, one: “can forget about the quality of the reproduction and simply be reminded ... that it is a famous painting of which one has already seen a reproduction” (21). The uniqueness of the original now lies in it being “the original of a reproduction.” One is no longer struck by the uniqueness of the image and what it says “but in what it is” - an object whose value lies in its rarity; its market price being a reflection of its spiritual value, an “atmosphere of entirely bogus religiosity.” Art is treated as holy relic and art works are interrogated to ascertain their genuineness, only then can they be declared “art.” Berger concludes: “If I look at this painting hard enough, I should somehow be able to feel its authenticity. *The Virgin of the Rocks* by Leonardo da Vinci: it is authentic and therefore it is beautiful” (21).

becomes annihilated as “the jargon takes over this task and devaluates thought” (6).

Adorno’s depiction of the jargon of authenticity outlines a specific use of language that does not proceed from the necessity of the subject matter and does not allow the listener to engage either fully or reciprocally. Citing Benjamin, Adorno identifies the “aura” (6) of words, i.e. the illusion of them abounding with more meaning than intended. He notes that this is always an aura in a state of decomposition, therefore a mere jargon: “the terms of the jargon of authenticity are products of the disintegration of the aura” (6). Aura effectively exaggerates all general concepts to the extent that their “mediation through the thinking subject disappears completely under the varnish” (9). The words no longer have conceptual content; they give the illusion that they have substance by seeming to convey something of the speaker’s very essence. The jargon eradicates any sense of the speaker’s individuality since the language used only ever refers to a void. Clearly acknowledging Adorno’s argument, Potter claims that the quasi-biblical jargon of authenticity, with its language of separation and distance, has become so much part of our moral shorthand that we don’t even always notice that we’ve slipped into what is essentially a religious way of thinking (2010: 12).¹⁸

Fake

Further concepts that make productive use of the antonyms of authenticity include Debord’s notion of the Spectacle and Baudrillard’s idea of the Simulacrum – both providing a framework to engage with, interrupt and critique perceptions of truth and reality. Debord claims that in societies in which: “modern conditions of production

¹⁸ Equivalently, Kenneth Burke (1970) talks sceptically of what he refers to as “god-terms,” specifically pinpointing the way in which the foundations of theological language can give an insight into the language used to describe the everyday.

prevail [*there is*] an immense accumulation of Spectacles. All that was once directly lived has become mere representation” (2009: 1). Within the Spectacle, humanity is brought “under its sway” (16) resulting in: “mere images [...] transformed into real beings – tangible figments which are the efficient motor of trancelike behaviour” (18). Debord depicts the concept of the Spectacle as an inauthentic and debilitating ideological apparatus that is deliberately employed to obscure the real, generating substitute truths for its population to abide by in a docile manner. He states that *The Society of the Spectacle* was written with the “the deliberate intention of doing harm to spectacular society” whilst proposing that ‘the real’ does still exist, waiting to be unearthed from beneath the counterfeit stratum of the spectacle (2009: iii). Potential acts of resistance might therefore set about revealing obscured truths.¹⁹

In Debord’s later *Comments on the Society of the Spectacle*, there seems to be more of a nihilistic outlook in his thinking, then seeming to suggest that there no longer remains any place to discuss the realities that concern us because they can never free themselves from the crushing presence of media discourse and the forces organised to relay it (viii), for: “no one can be the enemy of what exists [...] We have dispensed with that disturbing conception [...] in which a society was open to criticism or transformation, reform or revolution. [...] all argument has become useless” (2011: viii).

Whilst Debord’s earlier writing implied at least some potential for agency in the act of rupturing perception of the spectacle to seek underlying truths, Baudrillard offers the far bleaker idea of a simulacrum that “conceals not the truth, but the fact that there isn’t any” (2008:102). Within the simulacrum: “the real is not only what can be

¹⁹ There is potential to link this to Lacan’s concept of the Real, that which is concealed by the Symbolic and Imaginary, serving as a constant reminder of the limits of representation.

reproduced, but that which is always already reproduced. The hyperreal” (1983: 146) - looped simulations of reality whose only referent is the fictional simulation of reality itself.²⁰ Hartman argues that the most crucial factor affecting the conditions under which we have come to think about authenticity in contemporary society is an invasion of simulacra through an exponential growth of film, TV and internet: “An era of mechanical reproduction in full swing” (2002: 13). We increasingly find ourselves within the conditions described by Baudrillard (1994) where historicity is preserved only as an artificial or frozen memory and the difference between the original and the imitation is nil (Hartman 2002: 14).

Baudrillard contends that the age of simulation begins “with a liquidation of all referentials” (1983: 4) - it is not about imitation, reduplication or parody but of “substituting signs of the real for the real itself” which threatens concepts of difference predicated on binaries like ‘true’ and ‘false,’ and the ‘real’ and the ‘imaginary.’ In exploring this proposition, Baudrillard considers how the state might react to a simulated rather than a real hold-up, for whilst the latter does nothing but disturb the order of things, the former attacks the reality principle itself:

Transgression and violence are less serious because they only contest the distribution of the real. Simulation is infinitely more dangerous because it always leaves open to supposition that, above and beyond its object, law and order themselves might be nothing but simulation.

(1994: 20)

What results is “a real that is not only what can be reproduced, but that which is always already produced. The hyperreal” (1983: 146).

²⁰ The essence of this concept emerges in Plato’s *Republic* (2007) for in his allegory of the cave (240-248) the prisoners, “their legs and necks being so fastened that they can only look straight ahead of them and cannot turn their heads” (241) only experience the world as represented by the shadows of puppeteers from a fire, which, unbeknown to them, are merely an illusion. Plato’s image reflects the idea of an entirely confined humanity oblivious to its limited perspective on reality: “And so in every way they would believe that the shadows of the objects we mentioned were the whole truth” (Plato 2007: 241).

Eco further explores this concept of hyperreality when, using an equivalent strategy to Baudrillard, he scrutinises the concept of Disneyland - arguing that it not only produces illusion but also stimulates a desire for it (1998: 44).²¹ The idea is also explored by Hartman who, in declaring the arrival of the era of the authentic fake, argues that mankind desires being deceived: “The fake becomes a genre delighting in the anti-natural, the phony, the cosmetic, the transvestite, the falsie of the self-made man or woman – forgeries often so skilful they cannot be discovered unless they unmask themselves” (2002: 27). In the face of the authentic fake, “nostalgia assumes its full meaning” and a multitude of myths of origin and signs of reality emerge in an: “escalation of the true, of lived experience, resurrection of the figurative where the object and substance have disappeared” (Baudrillard 1994: 6). The trigger for this quest for the real “is rooted in revolution, or at least in the transfiguration of all prevailing social values and institutions” (Golomb 1995: 12) which finds itself pronounced in extreme situations, be they personal or external crises, but also in significant social and historical crises such as that arising from the decline of the ethos of objectivity, rationality and enlightenment (3). However, in Lacanian terms, such a desire for the real is always impossible to realise and this impossibility maintains and further encourages rather than cancels the desire for it.

Deleuze additionally mobilises the concept of the simulacrum, highlighting that whilst we tend to think that there is an actual world that precedes simulation, there is an ‘original’ process of simulation: “Beings or things emerge from processes of copying, doubling, imaging and simulation” (Colebrook 2002: 99). Instead of the division

²¹ In the fake New Orleans of Disneyland, the crocodiles do not have to be coaxed and always correspond to our demands; technology can give us more reality than nature can. A trip on the actual Mississippi is likely to yield no sightings of real crocodiles and may consequently leave us feeling homesick for Disneyland.

implied by Baudrillard of a world of reality versus its artificial and virtual copy, Deleuze argues instead for an entire world of simulacra within which is produced only an effect of an original. For Deleuze: “Things are simulacra themselves, simulacra are the superior forms” (1994: 67). In a reversal of the sense of lack or loss implied by Lacan, Deleuze’s simulacrum is not about the loss of the real - it has become the real itself.

These various insights into the discourse of authenticity as it relates to concepts of subjectivity and the real go on to provide some crucial linkage in this project between ideas of PDT and radical pedagogy. The inevitability of resistance in the face of power relations, per Foucault, might be interpreted as an opening in which to encourage direct theatrical intervention into the techniques that facilitate the operation of mechanisms of power on the post-dramatic stage. PDT has potential as a site in which to render the concept and illusion of subjectivity in ruins – becoming a productive arena in which alternative, more critical and unorthodox modes of subjectivity can be explored and enacted. The concepts of the Spectacle and Simulacrum offer a productive means to engage with, interrupt and critique perceptions of truth and reality – the post-dramatic stage, in many ways, having potential to lend itself to the idea of its frame becoming a mirror image of these apparatuses.

RADICAL PEDAGOGY

Radical

The field of radical pedagogy is an integral component of the latter parts of this project in its pursuit of an approach to implementing a radical pedagogy of PDT in practice. Before exploring what a radical pedagogy of PDT might entail, it is necessary

to take a moment to comprehend the complex etymology of the term 'radical.' In the specific context of radical pedagogy, Bailey focuses on its Latin origin: *radix*, meaning root and *radicalis*, of or having roots (2012: 6). Within contemporary performance research, Tomlin develops this usage through focus on the necessity implied here of having to dig down to the roots or origin of whatever is being examined – citing its usage within the political context of historical Marxism and the way in which it has influenced the oppositional radicalism of socialist avant-garde and neo-avant-garde movements: “the aim of such an imperative was to excavate the ideological myths of bourgeois capitalism in order to expose the 'reality' that such myths attempted to conceal” (2013: 5).

Additionally, she positions the notion of the radical as a "digging down" corresponding to deconstructive movement" - which finds realisation and application in the explorations narrated in Part Three, particularly those that set out to examine and unsettle the operation of representational practices within performance texts. This notion of having roots and rootedness has relevance too within Deleuze and Guattari's model of the rhizome; the root system with no essential origin that establishes its life force from and onto pre-existing root structures. Bourriaud makes attempts to conjoin the concept of the rhizome with the radical. He argues that modernism is forever haunted by its passion for radicality - “Pruning, purifying, eliminating, subtracting, returning to first principles” - with the result that much contemporary usage of the term 'radical' is the “dual effect of laziness and nostalgia” (2009: 44). As a viable alternative, he offers the concept of the *radicant*, which:

develops in accord with its host soil. It conforms to the latter's twists and turns and adapts to its surfaces and geological features. It translates itself into the terms of the space in which it moves. With its at once dynamic and dialogical signification, the adjective “radicant” captures this contemporary subject, caught between the need for a connection

with its environment and the forces of uprooting, between globalization and singularity, between identity and opening to the other. It defines the subject as an object of negotiation.

(51)

When adopted as a framework for thinking about radical pedagogy, Bourriaud's concept interprets the radical act as one that seeks to make intervention within and between contemporary apparatuses by placing the individual subject in constant dialogue and negotiation with them. The subject, in typically post-modern terms, is subsequently rendered as shifting, transitory and operating always in a dynamic state of liminality.²²

Critical

When concepts of radical pedagogy are evoked, one of the first philosophies of education that comes to mind is the field of critical pedagogy.²³ Paulo Freire is generally regarded as “the inaugural philosopher of critical pedagogy” (McLaren 1999: 49), his work leading to the emergence of a pedagogical practice striving to improve the lives of the marginalised and reduce oppression. Freire argues that modern educational institutions are mechanisms of and for dehumanisation, serving only to replicate and reinforce an already distorted status quo; advice that seems even more poignant in the face of neoliberalism’s contemporaneous impact upon pedagogical processes at all levels. In *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*, he argues that the transformative aspects of his pedagogical approach lie in its participants achieving new understandings

²² Throughout this project, I have agonised over usage of the word ‘radical.’ It seems to have become an increasingly problematic concept. For some, it is derogatory code for the far-left, whilst the rise of a radical far-right in Europe and further appropriation in the political labelling of ‘Radical Islam’ has further problematised its currency. I have attempted to put the word under erasure, per Derrida, and I have also left it out entirely. However, it is now reinstated as I felt that it was the only viable means to capture a variety of very specific nuances that are necessary to the agenda of a radical pedagogy of PDT.

²³ Critical pedagogy is generally perceived as the pedagogical consequence of the work of the Frankfurt School, who argued that educational institutions serve only to reinforce dependency on, and hierarchical understanding of, authority: providing a “distorted view of history” and “taken-for-granted truths” that undermine the kind of social consciousness required to bring about change and social transformation (Breuing 2011:3).

of reality. When students' creative powers become annulled by what he calls the "banking concepts of education," then only the interests of oppressors can be served: "who care neither to have the world revealed nor see it transformed" (1996: 54). Freire specifically promotes processes of 'authentic thinking' that attempt to comprehend and critique reality. He argues that whilst we all inevitably acquire and assume social myths that have a dominant tendency, learning must always set out to be a critical process that serves to uncover real problems and actual needs. Processes of authentic thinking subsequently become a means to correlate one's own life experiences with one's education to create more unified understandings of reality.

Freire argues that the critical pedagogue must aim to never be influential over the opinions and attitudes of their students, focusing instead on the quality of dialogical relation. He offers a significant redefinition of the teacher/student relation: to counteract one-way (negational) pedagogic relations, it is necessary for both parties to simultaneously become both teacher and student to effectively consider reality through a critical lens:

The teacher's thinking is authenticated only by the authenticity of the students' thinking. The teacher cannot think for her students nor can she impose thought on them. Authentic feeling, thinking that is concerned about reality, does not take place in ivory tower isolation, but only in communication.

(58)

It is necessary, he argues, for both teacher and student to recognise that they are both subjects: "not only in the task of unveiling that reality, and thereby coming to know it critically, but in the task of re-creating that knowledge" (51). Freire values collective approaches to unveiling reality: through dialogical encounters with others, every single human being has the capacity to view the world critically (19), no matter how immersed they are in what he identifies as the "culture of silence" (30).

This is an idea that has a contemporary relevance in aiding a deeper understanding of our own submergence in an: “advanced technological society [that] is rapidly making objects of most of us and subtly programming us into the logic of its system” (Shaul 1996: 15). Whilst Freire’s concept of critical pedagogy might be riddled with limitations (the way in which, for example, it reinforces binary concepts of opposition around the figure of the oppressed/oppressor and hangs on to an absolute faith in the existence of a rational, essential subject) it still offers much towards the formulation of a radical pedagogy of PDT; particularly in terms of i) how his methodology shifts its participants from an object position to a subject position, and ii) his belief that the participatory processes of the *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* could lead to the emergence of ‘*conscientizaco*’: the development of critical consciousness - a dialectical process aiming to develop critical awareness of one’s own social reality through reflection (Freire 1996: 36).

Following Freire, Giroux pursues a Foucauldian trajectory examining the dominant role that educational institutions play in circulating specific truths about political, social and economic life; defining radical pedagogy as “a particular posture of questioning received institutions and received assumptions” (1992: 10). He suggests that there is i) a critical need for a language of critique that goes beyond the notion that the primary purpose of education is simply becoming an agent of economic efficiency and, additionally ii) that there is a critical need for a language of possibility: “a positive language of human empowerment” (1992: 10). Giroux’s specific concept of empowerment (a term that I would otherwise generally recommend for Adorno’s blacklist) is somewhat more defined and developed than that previously offered by the theorists of critical pedagogy before him, particularly in the way in which it encapsulates a specific ability to think and act critically with the intention of

interrogating and making transparent existing social forms.

One of Giroux's key concepts is that of a border pedagogy that sets out to interrogate and celebrate the partiality of subjectivity. He argues that practices of border pedagogy have potential to reveal how (i) subjectivities are produced historically and socially, and (ii) how fragile identity is as it moves into the borderlands: "There are no unified subjects here, only students whose voices and experiences intermingle with the weight of particular histories that will not fit into the master narratives of a monolithic culture" (1991: 63). Students' voices and experiences are given comparative value alongside the narratives that they are asked to engage with, potentially producing overlaps and interstices that might provide opportunity for creative examination and scrutiny. When conflicting narratives emerge, these borderlands become a productive site for critical analysis, creative experimentation and possibility based on the concept of disunity rather than unity. When an examination of borderlands uncovers the partiality of subjectivity, this then becomes a basis for recognising the limits of discourse and "necessitates taking a critical view of authority as it is used to secure all regimes of truth that deny gaps, limits, specificity and counter-narratives" (1992: 29). Once culture is viewed as a set of lived experiences and social practices, then it remains unfinished, multi-layered and always open to interrogation (99) with the result that it can be regarded as a social practice allowing both teachers and students to construct themselves as active agents in the production of subjectivity and meaning.

Additionally, Giroux calls for critical examination of the role of power within representation - central to any critical pedagogic practice, he argues, should be scrutiny of how: "the relationship between power and knowledge works as both the practice of representation and the representation of practice to secure particular forms of authority" (1991: 52). This approach actively invites the interruption of representational practice

to encourage students to read and write with and against existing cultural codes, whilst discovering and creating new spaces for new manifestations of identity and subjectivity. In practice, this might involve employing alternative modes of representation (he suggests, for example, the use of video, photography and print products) as well as integrating popular culture as a “serious object of politics and analysis” (1991:53).

Brunner similarly urges teachers to always employ diverse texts within their practice – alongside books, to include film or TV scripts and musical lyrics – created by others for the provocation of self-reflection and self-analysis: “As students are called on to explore their own personal histories, their social, political, economic, and cultural realities through a curriculum of multiple voices, their predispositions become more apparent” (1994: 235). To do this, both dominant and subordinate texts must be read differently to be understood as both historical and social constructions shaped by structures of power, resulting in the interruption of “representational practices that make a claim to objectivity, universality and consensus” (Giroux 1991: 54). Consequently, those master narratives “based on white, patriarchal, and class-specific versions of the world” (55) can be effectively unravelled, challenged, and de-territorialised.

Post-Structural

Naughton examines the potential application of post-structuralist approaches to the politics of knowledge within pedagogy and the challenge that this subsequently poses to the idea of the rational, coherent individual telling rational and coherent stories about themselves (2007:4). He focuses on: i) Foucault’s concern with the interrelationship between power, discipline, knowledge and the body, and ii) the idea that what we hold true is a fiction created through ‘truth claims’ that express the

specific politics of knowledge of time and place (5). Naughton argues for a synthesis of all the critical aspects of critical pedagogy with post-structuralist perspectives on knowledge to encourage refusal to the naturalisation of claims to truth and avoidance of a sense of “that’s just how it is” (16).

Whilst for critical pedagogy theorists, liberty is hypothetically achieved by undertaking an ideology critique to strip truth of ideology; for the post-structuralist (following Foucault) the belief must be that truth cannot be stripped of its politics since truth itself is an entirely political fiction (19). Naughton upholds Foucault’s commitment to power relations being productive through the production of resistance to domination - proposing two central strategies that might support the identification of ‘regimes of truth’ so as to employ a deliberate practice of liberty that combines both critical and post-structuralist approaches: i) to always seek out multiple perspectives that challenge one’s own governance by truth and its associated regimes by seeking alternative perspectives on a situation to create multiple perspectives that produce new truths of resistance (47); and ii) overlaying one’s own truths with marginalised meanings as a way to develop meanings and actions that are more equitable and just (47). Both strategies involve being strategically multiple in challenging truth and its regimes, seeking alternative perspectives that may not have been previously transparent - especially from groups and individuals who experience discrimination and/or marginalisation in a specific regime of truth.

Naughton offers a specific approach to working with texts that finds relevance in the formulation of a radical pedagogy of PDT in Part Three – proposing employment of a range of tactics for deconstructing them to reveal their contradictions with regimes of truth and their interrelationships with power. At the foundation of this lies direct employment of Derrida’s approach to deconstruction as a means of uncovering the way

in which both words and images are used to prove something and to fix how we understand something, exposing the internal contradictions in systems of thought and revealing the multiplicity of meanings, contradictions and assumptions underlying our understanding and ways of knowing (77-78).

To “deliberately practice for freedom” Naughton additionally draws on the work of Deleuze and Guattari to employ tactics of rhizomatics (120) – in effect, exploring the politics of texts to create new texts. The text is deconstructed through exploration of how it makes meaning, how it connects with things outside of it and how it explores and organises meanings and power through offshoots, overlaps, conquests and expansions (120); a new text is subsequently created through new understanding and through inter-textual linkage with other texts that would not otherwise be referred to. Employing this logic of rhizomatics means that meanings can be deconstructed and reconstructed and our ‘will to truth’ can be challenged to find strategies to ‘become’ differently; we can map other possibilities and other ways of knowing, while remaining open to rewriting them (144). An employment of rhizomatic strategies within post-dramatic making processes provides an opportunity to destabilise the authority of dramatic texts and opens doors to a multitude of voices, experiences, identities and interpretations existing alongside one another within post-dramaturgy.

Anarchistic

Further inspiration for destabilisation of the authority of dramatic texts might also be drawn from anarchist approaches to pedagogy. DeLeon and Love observe that in the search for forms of radical pedagogy, the dominant radical paradigm tends always to be critical pedagogy: anarchism often being overlooked within the conceptualisation of critical theory in education (2012: 159). According to Haworth,

anarchism has a complex relationship with education and critical pedagogy can be regarded as having its foundations in anarchy anyway because of the way in which it sets out to scrutinise the processes by which pedagogy can question and subsequently resist authoritative structures. Haworth argues that there is a critical need to position anarchism within approaches to radical pedagogy to encourage the generation of potential alternatives to the intensive shift to universalising capitalism that has taken place at all levels of society (2012: 4).

Anarchism is a collection of ideologies, movements and theories that is frequently misconstrued as simply striving for the total absence of authoritative structure. Haworth argues that the concept of anarchism in isolation has been predominantly misunderstood, misinterpreted and misrepresented in political, economic, social and cultural spaces (3).²⁴ Mueller argues that anarchism in its misrepresentation is often positioned synonymously with chaos, disorder and violence and is therefore more likely to evoke images of violent demonstration and damage to property rather than what is actually a “nuanced philosophy” based upon foundations of “economic and political equality.” In shifting away from preconceived images of social disintegration, the ideals of anarchist theory lie in:

a strong valuation of individuals as ends in themselves, a commitment to egalitarian and democratic methods, and a staunch opposition to hierarchical institutional power arrangements that subordinate some individuals to others. Fundamentally, anarchist theory operates under the notion that people can and should determine the direction of their own lives, and that social arrangements should be constructed with this aim in mind.

(Haworth 2012: 15)

²⁴ Similarly, DeLeon & Love highlight the common mis-characterisation of anarchism as “violent and chaotic” (160) and how, in fact, anarchist theory is informed by the autonomy of the individual, the importance of small and localised community, the move towards more organic communities and organisational structures, social justice and the freeing of desires (2012: 160).

Developing skills for self-determination subsequently becomes the intended outcome of the pedagogical encounter.

To encourage the development of anarchist values, Mueller argues that one must offer an open invitation to “render [...] the hegemonic or the sacred questionable and open to dissection” (2012: 22).²⁵ Anarchism, for Mueller, is not about what is written, but about what is to be done. It is:

the simultaneous negation of things as they are, the anger that flows from viewing the world as riddled with oppression and justice, and the belief that this anger is pointless if one does not seek to do something in the here and now.

(76)

Anarchism goes beyond mere rejection of the status quo and instead seeks the creation of viable and egalitarian alternatives to the present.

It is specifically in concepts of post-anarchism that useful insight can be gained as to how a radical pedagogy of PDT might operate. Concepts of post-anarchism take on board traditional anarchist approaches and fuse these with post-structuralist theory. Todd May’s *The Political Philosophy of Post-Structuralist Anarchism* (1994) is often referenced as the origin of this specific mode of critical thinking. May argues that the contemporary challenge for post-structuralism is to offer an account of itself as a theoretical political practice which cannot be solved through the traditions of liberalism and Marxism, but instead through “the neglected ‘third way’ of political theory: anarchism” (2011: 41). Whilst anarchism might be dismissed for its “ethical relativism or voluntarist chaos” it provides, he argues, a framework within which post-structuralist thought can be situated and more adequately evaluated. Post-structuralism, argues May:

²⁵ Mueller further argues that anarchist pedagogies should never involve a dogmatic disciplining of students’ minds as this would unsettle the very underpinning values of anarchism. Anarchist pedagogies must involve the development of free and critical minds without extensive coercion in instruction.

“leaves the decision of how the oppressed are to determine themselves to the oppressed; it merely provides them with intellectual tools that they may find helpful along the way” (44). He argues that post-structuralist theory is in fact more consistently anarchist than traditional anarchist theory has proved to be - both traditional anarchism and post-structuralism setting out to seek societies in which: “people are not told who they are, what they want, and how they shall live, but who will be able to determine these things for themselves” (44).

The task then is to consider how to re-invent and resolve the placing of anarchist pedagogies within frameworks of post-structuralist thought. Nicholas, for example, argues that drawing on post-structuralism offers a useful and dynamic means to completely re-evaluate anarchist pedagogy - post-structuralist thought, particularly in relation to concepts of power and subjectivity, widens both the definition and terrain of anarchism in a way that has significant implications for constructing transformative educative processes premised on an ethics of freedom or autonomy (2012: 242). Consequently, he argues, any post-anarchist pedagogy that is to include the nuance of post-structuralism should ensure that it includes concern for how we learn to be subjects and should make that process as autonomous and transparent as possible: “post-structuralist-informed anarchist pedagogy should be concerned with the centrality of discourses in learning how to be a self” (243). This potentially reveals how subjects become implicated within power structures that can be dominating and restrictive, or positive and enabling. Nicholas suggests rooting a re-contextualisation of anarchist understandings of power relations within Foucault’s conception of power to focus upon a productive conception of power that constitutes the discourses within which we are ‘subjected’ - the result being a pedagogic practice that is dedicated to fostering autonomous subjects and not just the liberation of pre-existing autonomous subjects

from a repressive power regime (244).

The overriding task of this project is, in effect, to find resolution between concepts of PDT, authenticity and radical pedagogy in pursuit of an approach to a radical pedagogy of PDT in practice. To do this, it is necessary to focus on aspects of critical pedagogy that have mileage in encouraging the generation of critical frames that might make transparent and interrupt constructs of the real in order to comprehend and critique its very nature. Post-structural approaches to the politics of knowledge within pedagogy additionally play an important role here, particularly in terms of refusing naturalisation of all claims to truth. Anarchist approaches to pedagogy provide an opportunity to negate the way things are and, when integrated with post-structuralist approaches to pedagogy, offer a range of intellectual tools to support resistance.

STAGING

In *Part One: Intersections* I explore four distinct perspectives depicting ways in which notions of authenticity converge with and inform practices of PDT – these are: realities, bodies, subjectivities and spectators. The structure of Part One largely takes the form of a series of propositions that each acknowledge interconnection between ideas of PDT and concepts of authenticity.²⁶ Whilst the discourse of radical pedagogy is not the central concern of Part One, there is inevitably some preliminary linkage made and initial arguments offered in preparation of the idea that PDT has unique potentiality as a dynamic counter-apparatus for radical pedagogy. *Realities* explores

²⁶ Each of the three sections of this project requires specific variation in my own subject position within the text – from scholar, to scholar spectator, through to teacher maker. This has implications for the stylistic qualities of each section and culminates in an increasingly fragmented and rhizomatic approach that is intended to reflect the means and intent of the performance making processes that are depicted in its final sections.

some of the ways in which PDT purposefully exploits the ambiguity and uncertainty of the real, particularly through incessant interplay between concepts of reality and fictionality. *Bodies* attempts to capture the dynamic nature of the resistant presence of a post-dramatic body in its constant, ruthless and unpredictable to and fro between frames of representation and the real. *Subjectivities* argues that PDT assumes a default position focusing on and even obsessing over post-structural and post-modern critiques of the fixed self and suggests that this offers possibilities to think about and represent the subject using alternative notions and constructs. *Spectators* considers the experience of the post-dramatic spectator in shifting to reception of the ambiguous, multi-faceted, simultaneous and instantaneous that might mimic the pandemonium of everyday reality – and, in doing so, provides some theoretical understanding of the subject-position that I adopt in Part Two. The findings of Part One are later synthesised in a series of spectator accounts of PDT performed by children and teenagers in Part Two, and additionally provide the groundwork for formulating an approach to mobilising a radical pedagogy of PDT in practice in Part Three.

The overriding purpose of *Part Two: Creative Works* is to extend understanding of how notions of authenticity might inform the practice of PDT through application to a collection of first-hand spectator accounts of a range of post-dramatic works that each locate children and teenagers at their core. Within this discussion, I do not attempt to provide an exhaustive account of examples of PDT made with children and teenagers, nor do I particularly focus on thematic description or analysis across the works. Instead, I remain attentive to the logic of each work considered to offer a range of self-contained descriptions in which underpinning ideas are confirmed for formulating an approach to PDT as a counter-apparatus for radical pedagogy. I operate very much in the present tense to curate more than a decade of spectating PDT performed by children

and teenagers narrated through myself as scholar spectator. Through assuming this position, I am able to offer situated and affected responses to each performance work which makes particular emphasis of the way in which each capitalises upon the specific power relations inherent in the child performer/adult spectator relation and how many of them shift concerns of subjectivity into the auditorium.

These works are: Victoria's *üBUNG* (2003), where child performers provide a sharp focus of quasi-reality in stark opposition to the more two-dimensional depiction of adults represented on film; Rimini Protokoll's *Airport Kids* (2008), which depicts the nomadic existence of children and teenagers who follow their parents endlessly around the world and have to adapt, chameleon-like, to their ever changing surroundings; Ontroerend Goed's *Once and For All We're Going to Tell You Who We Are So Shut Up and Listen* (2008), which initially seems to provide insight into the more primitive, visceral and violent energies of the teenager but, through the exact repetition of its choreography, reveals that the anarchy and disorder depicted is always an entirely fabricated and pre-planned act; Victoria's *That Night Follows Day* (2009), an hour-long list of relentless speech acts spoken by children and teenagers exposing the subjecting power of language; Ontroerend Goed's *Teenage Riot* (2010), which deliberately provokes the adult spectator through its depiction of youthful rebellion and ferocious commitment to resistance; Mammalian Diving Reflex's *Haircuts by Children* (2010), which necessitates urgent renegotiation of usual adult/child power/trust relationships and requires reconsideration of the parameters that would usually impose a gulf between children and adults, and control over the subjectivation of children's bodies and actions; Campo/Gob Squad's *Before Your Very Eyes* (2012), where the spectator is positioned as voyeur to a group of children and teenagers who, located in a 'safe-room' constructed from one-way mirrors, peer into the future as themselves as adults and

nostalgically back to their not so distant pasts; Ontroerend Goed's *All That is Wrong* (2013), which is an exercise in cultural mapping and self-reflection at the threshold of adulthood; and Boris Charmatz's *L'Enfant* (2014), a performance work for nine adults, three machines and twenty-seven increasingly unruly and anarchic children who take part in acts of spontaneous and creative resistance.

Notably, each of these works originates from outside of the UK²⁷ and a significant proportion of the work comes from Belgium.²⁸ Many of them have previously attracted scholarly discussion around notions of labour and exploitation; agency and responsibility; and their interrelationship with the adult spectator. Whilst that discussion continues to emerge and remain significant here, my overriding aim is to broaden this debate to begin to formulate ideas for teaching and learning within a radical pedagogic framework. In effect, my first-hand spectator accounts provide underpinning field research developing my response to the question of how notions of authenticity might inform the practice of PDT by locating myself amidst the works in the live performance setting to fully consider their affect on myself as adult spectator.

Whilst I have been spectator to each of these works in a live setting, the narrated accounts are supplemented by more recent access to entire recordings of the originals,

²⁷ That is not to say that comparable practice does not exist in the UK - the example of Scotland's Junction 25 being evidence of an innovative postdramatic practice that places young people at its core.

²⁸ Orozco and Boenisch emphasise the emergence from Flanders in the 1980s of a generation of artists known as the 'Flemish wave' who "blended forms, blurred aesthetics and invented then unknown performance formats" so putting Dutch-speaking Belgium on the map of experimental/contemporary performance practice. They argue that thirty years later, a whole new cohort of innovative theatre-makers continue to "defy the discipline's boundaries and expectations, and to challenge the very stretched and widened notions of their predecessors." They argue that if we were to persevere with defining a model of contemporary Flemish theatre, it would probably identify common engagement and participation in ongoing dialogue with contemporary critical-aesthetic debates as well as the socio-political contexts in which they occur. The authors argue that the localism of the work has always been simultaneously internationally orientated – particularly in terms of the co-operation of co-producers across Europe and further afield reflecting the 'globalized' Europe of the early twenty-first century (2010: 397). Indeed, embedded in many of the works we discover sophisticated strategies for simultaneous translation under the premise of being received by a multi-lingual global spectator.

short extracts available online and, in the case of the work by Ontroerend Goed, full transcripts of the performances in *All Work and No Plays* (Goed: 2014). These additional sources have had considerable impact upon the way in which each work is restaged here – from the fragmentation of some accounts, through to the more linear narrative of others. To conclude Part Two, I revisit some of the intersections emerging in Part One between concepts of authenticity and PDT as they have specifically emerged in these works to offer preliminary ideas to take forward in formulating an approach to PDT as a counter-apparatus for radical pedagogy in Part Three.

Part Three: PDT as a Counter-Apparatus for Radical Pedagogy in Practice next assumes a perspective originating from within the messy terrain of performance making to seek out possibilities to exploit PDT as an apparatus for radical pedagogy in practice. Here, I argue that through dissonant and recalcitrant making practices, PDT has a unique capacity to operate as an innovative counter-apparatus for radical pedagogy that enables its participants to co-author acts of creative resistance outside of the usual hegemonic modes of theatrical production that are often prescribed for and expected of young people. I argue that PDT can be mobilised to instigate “the relentless fight between living beings and apparatuses” (Agamben 2009: 17) by ensuring that the participants of a radical pedagogy of PDT can intervene in their own processes of de-subjection and explore alternative and unorthodox, perhaps substitute forms/modes of subjectivity away from those prescribed by contemporary apparatuses.

This critical reflection on my own practice emerges from immersion in a range of processes as teacher maker over many years; each of which has made a significant contribution to my own grasp of the pedagogic processes potentially available when making PDT with young people. I delimit the depth of focus here to the experiences of making three performance works over three consecutive years: *All Straight in a Line* or

Wild Like Thorns (2012), *Think of Me Sometime* (2013) and *Music to Be Murdered By* (2014). Whilst these individual performance works are not intended as research outputs in themselves, I focus instead on critical reflection on meaningful aspects of process and performance that allow further scrutiny and expansion of the concept of a radical pedagogy of PDT. Within the fabric of Part Three's text, I "overlap, conjoin, disperse and shift" (Naughton 2007: 123) narrated fragments of rehearsal strategy and interaction, live performance, theoretical perspective and critical commentary within a framework that might seem to restore a rather traditional model of the dramatic paradigm through its artificial re-employment of: "exposition, ascending action, peripeteia and catastrophe: as old fashioned as it may sound, these are what people expect of an entertaining story in film and theatre" (Lehmann 2006: 34).

Exposition establishes the location of the practice and the potential impact of the political space of the educational institution on processes of subjectivation. There is reflection on key relationships and their modus operandi, and discussion of specific approaches to mobilising texts from the historical dramatic canon as scalpels with which to unmask the unresolved institutional forces, ideological codes, practices of representation and subjectivation that are encountered on a day-to-day basis. *Rising Action* makes a case for the potentiality of PDT as a counter-apparatus inspiring collaborative and creative acts of resistance – particularly in terms of critiquing power relations, interrupting norms of discourse and representation, and opening "a space for alternative realities to come into view" (Jürs -Munby 2013: 23). *Climax* explores the use of appropriation to reuse, reclaim and reframe materials within shared, dynamic, living codes. This is linked to Debord and Wolman's notion of *détournement* which encourages the emergence of new, even contrary meanings in texts that entirely subvert the original meaning intended for the text's target audience. I argue that positioned as

agents of détournement, student performers can become subversive intermediaries inhabiting a critical space between the primary author's encoding and the spectators decoding of originary meaning – and that their creative work, as the primary readers of source material, subsequently becomes like a decisive act of aberrant decoding. *Falling Action* considers the impact of the processes depicted upon concepts of authorship, arguing that its decomposition provides a mirror image to the destruction of fixed notions of subjectivity in pursuit of depicting more partial, fluid, interlinked and multiple selves. Standing at the threshold of constructing post-dramaturgy, I represent the student-performer as akin to Deleuze and Guattari's schizo-subject, the subversive nomadic wanderer who displays "flowing, displaced, non-dualistic, non-hierarchical" (Pile & Thrift 1995: 210) ways of navigating the world. The act of piecing together post-dramaturgy is framed as an entrance into a space of potentiality, in which traditional and logical modes of drama no longer necessarily apply; replaced instead by strategies and tactics that promote more lateral and rhizomatic connection - opening up spaces for a multitude of voices, experiences, identities and interpretations to exist alongside one another simultaneously.

Within the highly-manufactured narrative of Part Three, first person accounts by the student performers who were integral to the realisation of the practice are entirely excluded: rendering narratability itself "the epitome of inauthenticity" (Farrara 2009: 25). Subsequently, my account never totally disconnects itself from being narrative fiction, which provides a certain liberty to the way in which I can retell real events through what is, in effect, an entirely fabricated lens of myself as sole narrator. In this respect, I'm drawn to Butler who argues that when the *I* seeks to give an account of itself:

it can start with itself, but it will find that this self is already implicated

in a social temporality that exceeds its own capacities for narration [...] it must become a social theorist for the *I* has no story of its own that is not also the story of relation.

(2005: 7-8)

Following Butler's argument, I am never quite in the position here to ever confidently promote the emerging practice as solely my own, since this narrated account of it always remains "partial and constantly haunted by that which it cannot devise no definitive story" (40). The student performers who were once integral to making these performance works instead become the spectres of my narrative, existing only in some partial, liminal ontology located somewhere between being and non-being.

In finally depicting how PDT might be mobilised as a counter-apparatus for radical pedagogy, Part Three concludes with *Thirteen Theses on PDT as a Counter-Apparatus for Radical Pedagogy* which, in effect, provides a manifesto for practice. Additionally, *Notes to the Teacher Maker Towards the Realisation of a Radical Pedagogy of PDT* offers a selection of strategies and tactics used in the making of the works explored in Part Three. Both are intended as transferable frameworks that might inspire others to instigate their own radical pedagogic practices. The fields to which this project specifically makes its contributions are Performance Studies and Performance Pedagogy: it aims to identify and make practical application of the emerging interrelationships between a range of ideas and concepts that are bound up within the discourse of PDT, radical pedagogy and authenticity within a transferable framework for a radical pedagogy of PDT.

PART ONE

INTERSECTIONS

Part One specifically sets out to explore how notions of authenticity might inform the practice of PDT. Various points of convergence are identified around four sites of potential intersection: realities, bodies, subjectivities and spectatorship.

Realities focuses on ways in which PDT purposefully exploits the ambiguity and uncertainty of the real, preoccupying itself with incessant interplay between concepts of reality and fictionality. *Bodies* examines ways in which PDT's dominant performance mode foregrounds the presence of performers over representation of role. It argues that the post-dramatic body is always a resistant one, particularly in a deconstructive sense in its to and fro between frames of representation and the real. *Subjectivities* depicts

ways in which PDT departs from psychological representations of the subject associated with the dramatic paradigm and how this provides foundations for exploring alternative and more unorthodox forms of subjectivity. *Spectators* considers the experience of the post-dramatic spectator in terms of reception of the ambiguous, multi-faceted, simultaneous and instantaneous, having creative responsibility to respond to the fragmented stimulus of the post-dramatic environment. The observations from this discussion are later mobilised within a range of spectator accounts of PDT performed by children and teenagers in Part Two, and additionally provide some of the groundwork for formulating an approach to a radical pedagogy of PDT in practice in Part Three.

REALITIES

In identifying points of convergence between constructs of PDT and notions of authenticity, I begin with ‘realities’ because this provides insight into the modus operandi of PDT and how this might be capitalised upon in an approach to a radical pedagogy of PDT. I argue that PDT accesses the discourse of live performance as a resistant site of authenticity which promotes challenge to both the messages of hegemonic media culture and the constructed-ness of the status quo. I identify the possibility of conducive interaction between aspects of theatre’s liveness and mediatisation in order to provide a rich terrain within which both performers and spectators can directly experience the tensions that emerge between the live and the simulated – a collaborative experiencing of opposing perceptions of reality that might instigate processes for unravelling and exposing constructed concepts of reality. I argue that deriving from PDT’s ever-present theatrical frame are a range of disruptive, sometimes involuntary processes, that challenge concepts of reality and that these can be accessed to set about eroding, undermining and re-purposing the mechanisms of

representation in pursuit of alternative perceptions of reality. I start to describe ways in which the unpredictability and unreliability of concepts of the real as depicted in PDT lends itself to the idea of PDT becoming a direct representation of the apparatus of the spectacle/simulacrum. I focus on the emergence of antithetical spaces between material process and signifier that can be emphasised to encourage a critique of representational practice and provide an extension to processes of representation to include de-representation. Finally, I argue that PDT's perpetual interplay between reality and fictionality produces a productive space for the employment of deconstructive tactics which might provide inspiration and tools for the very intent of a radical pedagogy of PDT.

PDT tends not only to acknowledge and make emphasis of the live aspects of the theatrical event, but also frequently sets out to thoroughly exploit them. In the wider context of performance generally, the discourse surrounding its liveness is often affiliated to concepts of the authentic, pristine and genuine - particularly when its live attributes are set against a perceived escalation in the mediatisation of society. In this respect, live performance might be loosely conceived as a last bastion against all that is deemed as inauthentic in a mediatised world. There is certainly some mileage in this argument that is worth investigating in the context of formulating an approach to a radical pedagogy of PDT – particularly in terms of the potential for exposing the inauthenticity of constructed media messages/representation in the live performance setting. This idea of performance having some kind of resistant authenticity is epitomised by Phelan's oft-quoted "performance's only life is in the present" and "performance cannot be saved, recorded, documented" (1993: 146) in which she positions live performance as a site of resistance opposing media culture which provides it with a stamp of both authenticity and subversiveness: live performance

seeming like “a last resort for resisting the dominant culture of media economy” (Fischer-Lichte 2008b: 68). The resistant quality of liveness as depicted by both Phelan and Fischer-Lichte would seem to imply a terrain that is fit for challenging the heavy-handed messages of hegemonic media culture and for combating the lack of transparency of the constructed nature of our status quo.

Power, however, argues that Phelan’s devotion to the notion of live presence is a complete romanticisation of the virtues of live performance (2008: 169); whereas Auslander dismisses her depiction of live performance on the basis that it exists and operates externally to the ideologies of capital and reproduction that define mediatised culture (1999: 45). Auslander generally has it that any notion of live presence is a complete impossibility in an age of simulacra since theatre has become increasingly absorbed by the language of the media: there can exist no opposition between theatrical and mediatised performance, instead there can only ever be interaction and historical contingency (Power 2008: 155). Despite this, Power suggests that Phelan’s position is far more complex than that depicted by Auslander for it envisages performance from within rather than without a mass media economy and because her definition of performance is never solely based upon liveness (170).

This suggestion of the potential for conducive interaction between aspects of theatre’s liveness and mediatisation finds application in both Part Two and Part Three in my explorations of intermediality ²⁹ as a means to nurture temporal and physical disconnection between separate components of the body and voice within explorations of subjectivity; as a productive means to explore and rupture performer/spectator

²⁹ Rajewsky states that everybody who uses the concept intermediality is obliged to define it (2005: 44). Kattenbelt states: “I like to use the concept intermediality with respect to those co-relations between different media that result in the redefinition of the media that are influencing each other, which in turn leads to a refreshed perception. Intermediality assumes a co-relation in the actual sense of the word, that is to say a mutual affect” (2008: 25).

perception of the spectacle/simulacrum; as a means to explore and directly experience the dynamic interplay between opposing perceptions of reality; and, most importantly perhaps, as a means of making embodied intervention into concepts of the real and the virtual. Generally, I argue that PDT provides productive territory within which it is possible to explore and directly experience the tension occurring between the live and the simulated: which has significant potential in exploiting the dynamic interplay between opposing perceptions of reality towards gaining a fuller understanding of concepts of the real.

One way in which PDT seems to confirm any claim made for performance as a site of genuineness, originality and authenticity is the way in which it appears to discard the theatre's traditional representational apparatus. In many ways, it is necessary to be cautious with this argument from the outset as the ever-present theatrical frame of PDT will always continually erode any assertion made for its authenticity because of the way in which it generates an involuntary stutter to processes of spectatorial relation that disrupt the concept of reality. Once the theatrical frame is viewed as having the potential to continually engender, destabilise and rupture concepts of PDT's authentic-ness, present-ness and real-ness, then the notion of performance's authenticity, particularly as it relates to PDT, starts to feel like a somewhat antiquated and quaint ideal.

In emphasising the generative/degenerative aspects of processes attributed to PDT stemming from the disruptive aspects of its theatrical frame, it could be argued that PDT is both a theatre of living, immediate presence and a theatre of perpetual death. Indeed, Lehmann asserts that PDT is always "a theatre of the present" (2006: 143) and that its sense of present-ness can only ever be grasped "as a perpetual self-division of the now into new splinters of 'just now' and 'in an instant'" (144). He

depicts an ephemeral theatrical present-ness that is forever extinguishing and deconstructing itself; always dissolving in the very moment in which it is ignited. To reinforce the idea, he cites Heiner Müller's depiction of performance as having more to do with death than the more frequently evoked life of theatre: "And the specificity of theatre is precisely not the presence of the live actor but the presence of the one who is potentially dying."³⁰ By depicting the present as a floating and continuously fading presence, he argues that the possibility of dramatic representation is eroded since the real experience on which it is based is "gone," is an absence, an "already leaving" before it has even started (144). Dramatic representation is not discarded, but instead continually pulls the rug from under its own feet to expose its own limitations in capturing any sense of reality.

Whilst Lehmann argues that the present-ness of PDT always erodes the full possibility of the successful operation of dramatic representation, Tomlin never totally excludes the operation of systems of representation within her depiction of the real in PDT. Crucially, she notes that the notion of present-ness within performance aesthetics is "always already a representation of 'being-present' rather than the 'thing itself.'" For Tomlin, PDT can never quite escape, evade or overcome representation and must instead: "explore its own representation of the present and/or presence, within its own representational limitations" (2013: 74). In this specific depiction of the operation of representation in PDT, there is recognition of its limited parameters and the requirement to regard its inadequacies as material to be explored and experienced by performers and spectators. Bottoms supports this line of thought when he argues that

³⁰ In Kluge, A. and Müller, H., *Ich bin ein Landvermesser: Gespräche*, Neue Folge, Hamburg: Rotbuch, 1996.

the 'real' is by its very nature representational and that, subsequently, the theatrical concept of an authentic self can only ever be a staged characterisation: "however much we might want to delude ourselves otherwise" (2009: 74). In setting out to make PDT within a pedagogical context, it becomes necessary to emphasise the seizing of mechanisms of representation and actively eroding, undermining, and re-purposing them in pursuit of alternative perceptions of reality. This finds relevance in providing foundations for formulating a radical pedagogy of PDT that seeks to gain alternative perspectives on constructed realities that might not necessarily be immediately transparent or indeed conducive to day-to-day existence.

Where perhaps PDT does seem to capture a genuine sense of the real is in the way it captures and foregrounds present time: the here and now. Indeed, Lehmann argues that when the authority of the written text is reduced to becoming mere 'material,' any sense of temporality that may have been contained within it (the historical time, for example, of the narrative) is diminished with the result that there is instead a need to: "designate the total real and staged situation of the performance as 'performance text' in order to emphasise the impulse of presence always inherent to it" (144). In this respect, it becomes necessary to consider the 'real time' of a theatre performance in its entirety, a perspective that is neatly articulated by Handke in *Offending the Audience* when he has his speakers say: "Time is real. It cannot be played as real. Since time cannot be played, reality cannot be played either" (1997: 24). Handke's negation of the possibility of playing time or reality on stage offers a principle to which PDT adheres: for it is within the auditorium, within the real time of the spectator that concepts of time and reality are explored and directly experienced. It is a perspective that depicts the temporality of performance as: "'theatre time' that is life time and does not coincide with the time of the staging" (Lehmann 2006: 144).

PDT's engagement with its own temporality does not emphasise seeking illusion, but instead signifies that the performance event occurs in the time of the spectator: the two cannot be prised apart. The relationship between spectator/performer subsequently becomes an acknowledged co-existence within the present-ness of the theatrical event and becomes performance material in itself.

It becomes clear throughout the sections of this project that PDT purposefully exploits the ambiguity and uncertainty of the real, and that this is key to performer/spectator relation in terms of a subsequent incessant and reciprocal interplay between frames of reality and fictionality. The ambiguity of the real in PDT is captured by Lehmann as permeating "all representation with the uncertainty of whether something is represented; every act with the uncertainty of whether it was one; every thesis, every position, every work, every meaning with a wavering and potential cancellation" (180). With the continual prospect of a self-invalidating PDT that's therefore *maybe real*, the focus is never the assertion of the real as such: "but the unsettling that occurs through the indecidability whether one is dealing with reality or fiction" (101).

Lehmann clearly values and makes great emphasis of the unpredictability and unreliability of concepts of the real in PDT, arguing that the fictive always remains at risk of attack from the real - for inherent to the constitution of theatre is that: "the real that is literally being masked in and by the theatrical semblance can resurface in it at any moment" (103). The risk of what he terms the 'irruption of the real' evidently draws on Lacan's concept of the Real: that which exists as a potentially uncomfortable and unpredictable intrusion to both the Symbolic and the Imaginary. In PDT, the real can be capitalised upon to become a useful 'co-player' through a strategy and aesthetic of "indecidability" (100) whereby it becomes unclear as to whether one is dealing with

reality or fiction.³¹

The intricate web of fictionality and reality that is played out within the fabric of PDT additionally lends itself neatly to the idea of theatre becoming a mirror image of the apparatus of the spectacle/simulacrum. In his Epilogue to *Postdramatic Theatre*, Lehmann discusses the tendency for fiction and reality to become inextricably merged within the media: it is not because people mistake that which is invented with that which is real, it is down to the: “manner in which the signifying process divides the thing and the sign, the reference and the situation of the production of the signs” (184). The experience of incessant to and fro emerging between modes of reality and fictionality in PDT reflects Tomlin’s argument that the conviction that we are now living in a simulacrum, along with the widespread discrediting of the grand narratives, has brought about an entire collapse of the boundaries between the fictional and the real that were once the basis of theatre's mimetic representational apparatus (2013: 35).

This muddling of the dichotomy of real and fictional is explored by Epner who contends that PDT’s use of meta-theatrical strategies of recycling and authentication ensures a shift to a territory operating “beyond illusion” where we might encounter the employment of anti-illusionary devices whose sole objective is to establish “immediate interaction” with the spectator (2009: 290-291). She argues that these multiple strategies culminate in a laboratorial theatre whose primary function is to scrutinise the “fundamental relationship between reality and fictionality.” She contends that in employing the concept of the authentic as the

³¹ Bleeker argues that with the development of the 'textual landscapes' of PDT comes a 'multiplication of frames.' And that as unifying perspectives "are deconstructed and replaced by other frames, or rejected altogether so that the performance appears to offer the audience more direct contact with what is present on stage" that this results in "ambiguous and confusing experiences" because of the way in which PDT "draws attention to the problem of representation, of representational forms and of how they are perceived, or not" (Bleeker 2004:29).

“original” (in contrast to the “fake” or “imitation”) and in its wider sense of “genuineness” or “reality” (in contrast to “fiction” or “pretence”), one can see great potential for accessing and employing the discourse of authenticity within PDT - particularly in terms of “real bodies, real time and space” (291), which each become, for the spectator, guarantors of truth.

If, as Bailes argues, intense focus upon the body in performance results in the boundary between the fictional and so-called real event becoming muddled, when framed by the temporal and spatial demarcations of the performance event, bodies performing in “real time” can subsequently make it very difficult for the spectator to begin to draw distinction between its “real” or “fictional” status (2011: 9). On the flip side, Bailes argues that the perception of theatre as an intricately skilled and articulate practice also serves to prompt the spectator of the extent to which the artificial is constructed and at play. On a par with this argument, Epner recognises that since we are dealing with events that are framed as theatrical performance and repeated on stage from evening to evening, we can never “eliminate representation completely nor reach absolute authenticity” (292). PDT problematises concepts of the ‘authentic’ and the ‘theatrical’ resulting in the “collapse of the dichotomy real versus fictional” which locates both performer and spectator within a somewhat liminal ‘fictional-real’ - where scrutiny of both the “genuine” and the “sincere” can be embarked upon by both performer and spectator. For Epner, the overall strategy of PDT is not the breaking down of illusion and revealing of a “true truth” as such, but rather the productive amalgamation of the “authentic” and the “fictitious” (2009: 301).

PDT would therefore seem to inhabit an indeterminate zone somewhere between claims of reality and fictionality; a potentially antithetical space that is located

between real and signifying processes. Theatre is simultaneously a site, argues Lehmann, not just: “of ‘heavy’ bodies but also of a real gathering, a place where a unique intersection of aesthetically organized and everyday real-life takes place” (17). The hyper-organised reality of the aesthetic act of theatre, along with the act of reception “take place as a real doing in the here and now” (17). Theatre is “at the same time material process – walking, standing, sitting, speaking, coughing, stumbling, singing – and ‘sign’ for walking, standing, sitting, etc.” (102). PDT exploits the simultaneity of material process/signifier to undermine its own representational status: it is a live tension that, according to Lehmann, becomes radically thematised by putting “the real on equal footing with the fictive” (103).

A potentially antithetical space between material process and signifier is prised open in PDT to engender a distinctly critical lens on the mechanisms of its own representational practice. Pavis argues that PDT’s principal enemy is representation, for:

In place of figuring forth what the text is saying, PDT prefers to exhibit, to expose, the mechanisms of language, to treat the text as sound-object rather than be concerned with the words’ direct references. It thus interrogates the fragile theatrical equilibrium between the mimetic and the performative.

(2012: 3)

PDT brings critical frames to the treatment of performance texts that potentially expose their limitations in the live performance setting. Representational practice, in particular, is rendered problematic and having only limited coherence as a tool to capture the complex and incoherent nature of contemporary reality: “we do not do justice to [...] ‘experience’ by trying to make it comprehensible” (Carroll, Jürs-Munby & Giles 2013: 17). In tackling, undermining and attempting to overcome the limitations of its own theatrical representation, PDT actually puts representation at the forefront of

its presentational strategies. Indeed, Williams (2006) provides commentary on this rather paradoxical aspect of theatre's anti-representational strategies: "the theatre is never more theatrical, more metaphorical, than when it attempts to transcend its own conditions of representation" (101).

Whilst PDT might set about being highly critical of its own representational processes, it should be noted that representation simultaneously always remains PDT's integral ally. This is particularly evident in the ways in which representational processes are extended to simultaneously de-represent; inspiring a simultaneous construction/dismantling of representation within the PDT frame. A useful working definition of processes of de-representation is offered by Macherey:

the image, whether verbal or plastic, is not simply the evocation of a presence, but also, in its other facet, the de-representation of what it represents and therefore produces, projecting it into a mimetic space, a potentially critical distance. As a consequence, the effect of reality that the image produces is not alienating, at least not fatally, but it can function as a means of liberation if we know how to put it to work correctly.

(2005: 115)

Whilst Macherey defines de-representation here as an accidental and potentially useful side-effect of mimesis, a PDT practice that has radical pedagogic intent has potential to evoke its purposeful usage and perhaps go a little way towards knowing "how to put it to work correctly" by exploring and depicting processes that simultaneously construct/deconstruct representation within the PDT frame.

PDT's subsequent interplay between reality and fictionality produces a productive space within which it is possible to deliberately employ deconstructive theatrical tactics. Ever-shifting perception of reality and fictionality fosters an opportunity to undermine all that is perceived as 'constructed' through the provision of a benchmark of reality that is the present-ness of the performance event itself. Pavis argues that re-

connecting ideas of PDT to the concept of deconstruction involves going in a slightly different direction from Lehmann's account of the emergence of PDT; for whilst Lehmann does refer to Derrida's concept of deconstruction, he rarely takes time to differentiate it from his own concept of PDT. Pavis extracts the specificities of deconstruction within PDT as:

the way in which the mise-en-scene alternatively manifests and destroys itself before us. It locates and conducts its own fragmentation, highlighting its dissonances, its contradictions, its decentering. A single detail in the performance can deconstruct the entire narrative structure, ruin any claim of the production to represent the world or to build a character. This becomes a matter of operating on meaning itself, and not simply through superficial stylistic procedures. More importantly, here lies the whole difference with post-modernism, which acknowledges its taste for the hybridity of form and for an extremely developed intertextuality.

(2012: 9)

So, rather than the post-modern and post-dramatic being considered as one of the same thing, Pavis provides a means here to begin to understand and isolate the radically deconstructive intent of PDT (beyond mere aesthetic/stylistic traits) which has relevance in formulating an approach to a radical pedagogy of PDT through beginning to understand it as a process of deconstructive analysis that supports "an understanding of why things are like they are and to begin to make it possible to make them otherwise" (Nicholas 2012: 249).

This discussion has emphasised points of convergence between PDT and notions of authenticity in relation to 'realities' that find application throughout this project – in relation to the case studies of PDT performed by young people in Part Two, and the processual elements of a radical pedagogy of PDT in Part Three. This includes identifying opportunities to interrupt and critique claims to truth – whether that be in resistance to predetermined modes of subjectivity, or in making transparent the construction of the ideological principles within which we find ourselves operating.

Discovering a conducive means of interaction between aspects of theatre's liveness and mediatization provides rich creative terrain which finds application here in the use of pre-recorded film footage and live feeds, to experiments in slippage between tenses and shifting occupations of reality. In capturing the unpredictability and unreliability of concepts of the real, the rupturing of perceptions of the spectacle and simulacrum finds particular emphasis in Part Three where opportunity is taken through making performance work to interrupt and critique perceptions of truth and reality. Challenging the mechanisms of representation by seizing, undermining, critiquing and repurposing them becomes a key feature of the case studies and emerges as one of the overriding aims of my approach to a radical pedagogy of PDT. Aspects of deconstruction feature throughout as a critical means to disturb and dismantle the foundations of performance texts in pursuit of prising apart the intertwined ideological formations of reality that both the performance text and theatrical frame might represent.

BODIES

Discussion of points of convergence between PDT and concepts of authenticity in relation to 'bodies' provides an opportunity to explore how PDT's continual movement back-and-forth between concepts of reality and fictionality can be embodied within the presence of the post-dramatic body. Within this discussion, I identify ways in which the post-dramatic body is not always automatically encoded with clear signifiers of representation and how this can have considerable impact on both meaning making and relation. I argue that the post-dramatic body always remains riddled with remnants of representational practice and subsequently struggles with its own signification - performer presence often seeming ambiguous when it encounters frames of representation that it may not have even intended to associate with or relay. I explore

the dynamic quality of the post-dramatic body in its ability to shift between frames of representation and the real, transferring continually and productively between different performance modes. I offer foundations for thinking about the post-dramatic body in relation to radical pedagogy by arguing that the foregrounding of the body offers an opportunity for the post-dramatic performer to fully inhabit a critical space between the performance text and its reception that facilitates a truly experiential and critical mode encouraging direct experiential participation in pedagogic processes. Finally, I conclude that post-dramatic bodies are always bodies of potentiality – bodies of possibility focussing on the unknown and unexpected between bodies, in pursuit of uncovering new territories for exploring subjectivity.

Accounts of PDT generally concur that its associated performance mode foregrounds the physical presence of performers over their representation of role. Indeed, Power usefully identifies performer presence as “that which lies outside representation” (2008: 8). For Lehmann, the post-dramatic actor is “no longer the actor of a role but a performer offering his/her presence on stage for contemplation” (135). There is certainly often something acute about the presence of the post-dramatic body for it is no longer always automatically encoded with clear signifiers of representation that ask us to believe it is someone, something or somewhere else, despite often purposefully toying with those ideas. Continuing reflection on the post-dramatic mode of performance, Lehmann argues that the aura of physical presence always remains the point of theatre: “where the disappearance, the fading of all signification occurs – in favour of a fascination beyond meaning, of an actor’s ‘presence’, of charisma or ‘vibrancy’” (95). Whereas dramatic processes traditionally ensue between bodies, he states that the post-dramatic process occurs with/on/to the body: as “sensuality undermines sense” (162), the body becomes the key focus, refuses signification

(95) and “is absolutized” (96) so representing nothing but itself. When this significant shift in sign production occurs, he argues that what results is a sharp focus on presence and charisma which makes the body “an insoluble enigma” (96) that is ambiguous in its signifying character. The inference here is of something mysterious and coded, that which perhaps cannot be easily deciphered. Subsequently, he argues, the performer has only their self to offer which prevents “representation, illustration and interpretation” (163).

Lehmann’s fixation with the physical presence of the post-dramatic body certainly has mileage, but I would argue is just one aspect of a far more complex mode of performance required of the post-dramatic body - for even when the overriding intent is to foreground the aura of physical presence, it always remains riddled with remnants of representational practice that are likely to continue to interfere with and influence spectator reception. The post-dramatic body continually struggles with its own signification in processes that are often beyond the control of the performer, and it is this that I think Lehmann tends to underestimate in his account - for refusal to signify is a process that continually and purposefully flirts with the representational strategies of theatre to muddy meaning making. When the body is located within the frame of PDT, its presence becomes ambiguous as it becomes interfered with by frames of representation that it may not have even intended to associate with, or relay.

What Lehmann never quite captures is the dynamic nature of the resistant presence of a post-dramatic body in its constant, ruthless and unpredictable to and fro between frames of representation and the real. Whilst theatre makers might intentionally manipulate shifts in perceptions of reality within the fabric of a performance work, there are additionally those that arise naturally and inevitably through placement of the body within a frame that will always impose traces of its own

association with/inheritance of the mechanisms of theatrical representation. Even if processes of sign production have been purposefully dismantled, the 'real' body still finds itself in a dynamic struggle with the fictional frame of theatre - and traces of representation, illustration and interpretation will always linger and continue to interfere with/inform processes of reception.

Lehmann argues that when exposition of intense physicality results in the body becoming "absolutized," there is an ever so slightly paradoxical result in that the body then manages to appropriate all other discourses (95). The foregrounding of the physical body results in the body becoming: "the only subject matter. From now on, it seems, all social issues first have to pass through this needle's eye, they all have to adopt the form of a physical issue" (96). Such foregrounding of the body in performance is neatly encapsulated by Kaprow, who describes the construction of the traditional arts as based upon "historical forms of legitimation" (1993: 174), i.e. culture that is written upon the body of both the performer and spectator according to the script of the author. Arguing from within the domain of performance art, he states that here the bodies of both performer and spectator are employed as instruments to write upon culture as they: "improvise and invent interpretations through diverse personal, cultural and disciplinary perspectives" (Garofalo 1999: 43). When the body is foregrounded, it serves as an optic providing a first-hand account of all the processes and materials that it engages with in performance. In doing so, the post-dramatic body has the potential to inhabit and dominate a critical space between the performance text and its reception, so providing acute and ongoing interruption to the mechanisms of representation. I would argue that this specific mode of performance has potential to facilitate a truly experiential, kinaesthetic and critical mode of being that allows for direct participation in pedagogic processes - so

reinforcing the viability of PDT as a counter-apparatus for radical pedagogy.

Rather than limiting definition of the post-dramatic body to rely totally on the charisma of performer presence, it is perhaps more productive to consider it as always being liminal - able to shift continually and productively between diverse performance modes. Rather than reject the representational function/fictionality of the post-dramatic actor's body out rightly, it is helpful to regard it instead as meandering between ever-shifting manifestations of presence. Pavis suggests that the post-dramatic actor:

is a performer who does not attempt to construct nor to imitate a character; located at the interaction of a choral ensemble, in a process re-structuring the totality of his actions and physical performances. What is central is the simple presence of the person having abandoned the character, or as though in a vocal or physical endurance test.

(2012: 5)

Such depiction of the post-dramatic body clearly provides much generalisation for it captures little of the ambiguities, subtleties or complexities of the ever-shifting presence/modes of post-dramatic acting that I am suggesting. PDT necessitates mobilisation of a complex array of performance modes - which might then be intentionally/unintentionally ruptured, or set to contradict and negate one another, once juxtaposed with the theatrical frame.³²

Quick identifies strategies (that are specifically drawn from performance art as a means to differentiate from theatre) contributing to the possibility of

³² To try to capture the intricateness of the ever-shifting modes of post-dramatic presence, it is useful to consider various existing categorisations of modes of acting. States (1983: 24), for example, argues that an actor's relationship to their audience may shift 'keys' within a performance, between: (i) The self-expressive mode ("I" the actor), (ii) the collaborative mode ("You" the audience) and (iii) the representational mode ("He" the character). The self-expressive mode is associated with when an actor seems to be performing on his own behalf: "see what I can do" which might well be considered as the default position of the post-dramatic performer.³² Power (2008) also makes distinctions between alternative modes of theatrical presence when he defines (i) a "fictional mode of presence" (ii) an "auratic mode of presence" and (iii) a "literal mode of presence." Whilst the fictional mode can be loosely equated with the representational mode defined by States, Power defines the "auratic mode of presence" as the manifestation of aura that is constructed through the fame or reputation of the actor, playwright or artwork, along with the knowledge and expectations that spectators carry with them into the theatre.

“inscribing a notion of primordial reality within the eventhood of performance: of a real which might evade the operation of the frame” (1996: 13). He labels these strategies “reality effects” – which include the performer’s body, history and personality, the use of personal objects, real-time actions and the use of spontaneous and accidental processes (12). These are useful here in further comprehending how the ‘real’ functions in PDT in terms of engaging the spectator in processes of authentication and convincing of the existence of authenticity on the post-dramatic stage. Indeed, post-dramatic bodies often present themselves as autobiographical bodies (even if this simply involves identification using performers’ ‘real’ names). Langellier positions the popularity of autobiographical tools in creative processes against a backdrop of “disintegrating master narratives, [...] respond [*ing*] to the wreckage, the reclaiming, and the reflexivity of post-modern times” (1999: 126). In this sense, claims made for the autobiographical body in performance might seem like a valiant attempt to salvage a sense of the real through an intense focus on the individual against the devastation of everything that had previously operated under the grand narratives.

Heddon emphasises the deceptive nature of the inclusion of autobiographical material in contemporary performance practice. She argues that autobiography “serves as an authenticating symbol which underwrites an appeal to an unproblematised truth” (2008: 25-27). Authenticity cannot ever, of course, be presumed of autobiography; stories of the self can never quite detach from narrative fiction, particularly when they are placed within the theatrical frame and, like fiction “tend to expand the reality claim of what is, or appears to be, excluded” (Hartman 2002: 16). Human experience is usually assumed to be authentic and so becomes equated with authority which generates a stamp of truth, which is problematised immediately by the representation of

self – for in the act of representing the self, there are naturally many selves to be considered: “There is the self who was and the self who is. There is the self who is performed, and the performing self. Which self, then, is being presented?” (Heddon 2008: 27).³³

Heddon’s major concern for employing autobiography in performance is in the assumption that some ‘original’ or ‘authentic’ self can be enacted whilst remaining truthful to the ‘source’ (135) - assumptions that generally carve out narratives based upon fixed, essential subjects. When autobiography is employed, it is often constructed on a premise of the existence of a unity of self and its illusion of transparency is an entirely fraudulent means of naturalising the unified subject. Langellier provides a useful distinction between modernist and post-modernist narratives of self: the modernist personal narrative integrates a life in time and provides unity to fix the self or transform identity. The post-modern personal narrative contributes:

to the proliferation of multiple selves: porous; partial, shifting, contingent. Post-modern tales may feature fragmentation, borrowings and indeterminacies; glitzy, glossy, and high-tech strategies that break down grand stories and frustrate unity, essence and truth.
(1999: 139)

Indeed, where the use of autobiography in PDT becomes fascinating is when it is recognised as a difficult site of negotiation and struggle, a “boundary phenomenon”, existing in a liminal space somewhere between literary and social discourse, written and oral communication, public and private spheres of interaction, ritual and incidental

³³ Lavery in *Mourning Walk and Pedestrian Performance: History, Aesthetics and Ethics* shares similar concerns for autobiographical performance that are largely focused on the complex ethical questions based around: (i) the ‘framing’ of the event and its troubling of the status or ‘truth’ of the situation presented or represented, (ii) the transformation of the performer’s life into an object of consumption or entertainment; and (iii) the performer’s capacity for respecting the other (2009:52-53).

conversation, and between fact and fiction (138).

It is this kind of ambiguity that ensures that post-dramatic bodies are always bodies of potentiality. Lehmann argues that when “sensuality undermines sense,” the post-dramatic body should no longer “content itself with being a signifier but could be an agent provocateur of an experience without ‘meaning’, an experience aimed not at the realisation of a reality and meaning but at the experience of potentiality” (162-163). He maintains that a theatre of the body is always a “‘a theatre of potentiality’ since it focuses on the “unplannable ‘in-between-the-bodies’” (163) – retaining a sense of the unknown/unexpected but very productive interconnections that lie at the heart of Deleuze and Guattari’s notion of the body as machinic assemblage. One of the most significant contemporary discussions on potentiality comes from Agamben, who argues that potentiality is not simply the absence of an ability to, nor its negation, but is “the existence of Non-Being,” the “presence of an absence” and the “presence of that we cannot” (1999: 177). Lehmann further emphasises the operation of potentiality in PDT when he says: “the sense data always refers to answers that are sensed as possible but not (yet) graspable; what one sees and hears remains in a state of potentiality, its appropriation postponed” (99). That sense of almost grasping something but never quite achieving it, of persistently resisting the demands of logocentrism to uncover new territories and pathways, has relevance when exploring the nature of both post-dramatic bodies and subjectivities for it is in the state of ambiguity and provisionality that potentiality emerges. It expectantly positions the individual at a crossroads where the power that resides in potential may or may not be realised.

This discussion of points of convergence between PDT and concepts of authenticity in relation to ‘bodies’ has provided an opportunity to explore how PDT’s inherent interplay between concepts of reality and fictionality finds itself fully

embodied in the post-dramatic body. If it is always riddled with remnants of representational practice and subsequently struggles with its own signification, then it becomes a site in which the mechanisms of representation can indeed be purposefully undermined, critiqued and repurposed whilst at the same time being fully embodied and experienced. This potentially offers an entirely experiential and critical mode of being in which the post-dramatic performer can inhabit a critical space between the performance text and its reception in order to have and explore their own creative and intellectual adventures. The immediate bodily presence of the post-dramatic body has potential in emphasising the superficiality of theatre's systems of representational practice and subsequently supports pedagogic processes that might want to contradict and prise apart representation, heightening its cracks and hidden interrelationships with power systems. A focus on the post-dramatic body as a body of potentiality ensures an emphasis on the futurity of young people – which is certainly a concern of many of the case studies in Part Two and provides an implicit agenda to the function of a radical pedagogy of PDT in Part Three.

SUBJECTIVITIES

I next set about identifying aspects of subjectivity in relation to PDT and the discourse of authenticity. I identify a shift in discourse from established psychological representations of the subject associated with the dramatic paradigm, to representations that might be more aligned to the post-modern fragmentation of the subject. I argue that PDT is rich terrain in which concepts of the self can be celebrated, scrutinised and deconstructed, and that this provides ample opportunity to identify and embody alternative forms of subjectivity. I identify the way in which PDT often adopts a default position focussing on post-structural and post-modern critiques of the inherited templates of fixed subjectivity, rendering them as authored, antiquated and consisting

only of appearance. I provide an initial sketch of the way in which fragmentation of the subject in PDT sometimes manifests itself through intermedial devices which foster disconnection and alternative reconstruction of its fragments. Finally, I consider ways in which PDT offers alternative possibilities for thinking about and representing the subject – from the notion of the machinic assemblage as depicted by Deleuze and Guattari, to exploration of other alternative constructs like the posthuman, cyborg subject.

PDT involves a marked shift from the more established and secure psychological representations of the subject that might be associated with the dramatic paradigm - and with this comes a productive opportunity to explore alternative and perhaps more unorthodox forms of subjectivity. Such a shift necessitates an adjustment to the parameters of the performer's role within the post-dramatic aesthetic. Balme defines this modification of mode of performance in terms of a new focus upon being and materiality, rather than one that had previously valued appearance and mimetic imitation (2004: 1) – a transition involving a shift from more traditional, psychological approaches to the dramatic representation of character, to potentially more deconstructive modes that expose the body's materiality. With this comes the substitution of psychological representations of the self/subjectivity with something more aligned to what I have previously established as the post-modern fragmentation of the subject.

Boenisch continues this discussion when he argues that rather than reduce subjectivity to a linguistic, discursive or ideological structure, we can simply assert that the post-dramatic subject is “precisely what remains after the deconstruction of these structures has been completed” (2013: 125). Whilst I would question whether these processes are ever completed, what Boenisch implies in this statement is that PDT (and

post-structuralism) renders the concept of subjectivity as a singular 'thing' in ruins: it instead becomes a wasteland requiring urgent reconstruction and regeneration in more appropriate forms that might more accurately reflect the complex demands of contemporary existence. When those structures offered by the unity of language, or the temporality that emerges from linear narrative structure are diminished, there is inevitably a "changed perspective on human subjectivity" (Jürs-Munby 2006: 9).

Within this wasteland of subjectivity, the post-dramatic subject can perhaps be perceived as a fading/dying one both in terms of only ever existing in an ephemeral 'present moment' and in terms of a desire for the deconstruction and death of its own fixity. Spalding Gray was concise on the matter: "Theatre is about presence = Life = Death" (1981: 48). This overriding preoccupation with a dying subject does not of course mean that PDT is entirely disinterested in matters of subjectivity; often quite the contrary is the case: subjectivity becoming a persistent source of fascination and even obsession. PDT emerges here as a terrain within which the fetish of self can be celebrated, scrutinised and deconstructed and from which alternative modes of subjectivity can then be appropriately explicated. Jürs-Munby suggests:

What finds articulation here is less intentionality - a characteristic of the subject - than its failure, less conscious will than desire, less the "I" than the "subject of the unconscious." So, rather than bemoan the lack of an already defined image of the human being in post-dramatically organised texts, it is necessary to explore the new possibilities of thinking and representing the individual human subject sketched in these texts.

(2006: 9)

In exploring these alternative possibilities for thinking about and representing the subject, PDT seems to sometimes assume a default position focussing on and even obsessing over post-structural and post-modern critiques of the concept of the fixed self. Theatrical approaches that set out to critique Western models of subjectivity are of

particular interest to Fuchs in *The Death of Character* (1996) - Balme observes that whilst Lehmann had set out to position PDT primarily as a question of form and history affecting the configuration of time, space and the mediality of theatre, Fuchs had earlier regarded the exact same theatrical developments as a direct response to the critique of Western models of subjectivity that we might associate with post-structuralism and deconstruction (2004: 1).³⁴

The theatrical deconstruction of the subject might be regarded as a generative and productive process in which it is possible to seek potential alternatives, however partial these might at first appear. PDT renders fixed notions of subjectivity as authored, antiquated and consisting of nothing more than exteriority and appearance. Carroll, Jürs-Munby & Giles argue that there is a necessity when attempting to understand PDT to go beyond the binarism of real/representation, since: “theatre, even when it dismantles, cannot entirely do without norms, structures and subjectivities. These elements persist, but theatre in particular allows them to be experienced in their status as appearance” (2013: 28). Treating concepts of subjectivity as appearance draws

³⁴ Presence in the theatre, argues Fuchs, has always had two overlapping but separable components – in terms of the dramatic narrative that becomes so present as to be happening now, and in relation to the reciprocal liveness that originates in the co-presence of spectator and performer. The 1960s, according to Fuchs, marked the merging of these realms with the result that the dramatic text was to become “the enemy, rather than the vehicle of theatrical presence” (1996: 70). From here she uses the binary of speech/writing to provide an opening to “glimpse the course of the post-modern tearing at the banks of dramatic form” (71), resulting in the revealing of a theatre of “de-authentication” involving the “absencing” of the speaking subject (72). This approach, she argues, is demarcated by Derrida’s discussions of presence that result in a theatre “both after and “after” Derrida.” Derrida’s deconstruction of all logocentric assumptions was to open a theoretical route to a new form of theatre where “old vocabularies of plot and character had lost their interpretative power” – with the result that makers have since worked to expose the textuality behind the phonocentric fabric of performance (166), resulting in the emergence of textuality as theme, setting and independent constituent. Fuchs claims that we have faced a virtual deconstruction of the defining hierarchy that has sustained theatre since the Renaissance: “One might say that we have been witnessing in contemporary theatre, and especially in performance, a representation of the failure of the theatrical enterprise of spontaneous speech with its logocentric claims to origination, authority, authenticity-in-short, Presence” (1985: 172). Fuchs’ discussion of the impact of Derrida’s anti-logocentric reasoning upon contemporary performance practice perhaps offers a much-needed missing connection in Lehmann’s account, particularly in relation to performer presence and subjectivity.

attention to their authored-ness and, in subsequently making emphasis of the presence of the post-dramatic body, supports its leverage into a critical space between the performance text and spectator reception of it.³⁵

The subsequent fragmentation of the subject in PDT is sometimes reinforced through employment of the device of intermediality, which in effect nurtures temporal and physical disconnection between components of the body and voice, which may then be reassembled and as quickly dispersed. In the fragments of self that are laid out before the spectator there might occur, in a bid to fully understand them, a search to reconstruct them:

A 'human' moment flares up, the whole subject is momentarily found when the gaze has located the voice and returns it to the body - the moment of the human. Then the mechanisms of sounds, reactions, electric particles, images and soundtracks takes over again.

(Lehmann 2006: 150)

Furthermore, he argues that the post-dramatic text posits: "a materially significant and specific manifestation of human ontology that refuses a foundational premise" which is particularly demonstrated by the mediation of the human subject by new technologies. The result is rupture to any formerly 'natural' bodily coherence which subsequently alters comprehensions of subjectivity – which: "loses its borders, its uniqueness, and is opened up to hybridity and shared ontology: rendered a posthuman cyborg" (143). This

³⁵ Supporting this, Tomlin identifies the use of "citational strategies" that place representations of the real within quotation marks to underline the "constructed nature of the self and the real" reflecting "the shifting understanding of identity and reality in the world beyond the theatre" (2013: 109).

is exactly the concept of subjectivity proposed by Haraway: ³⁶ one that focuses upon the partiality of boundaries, taking pleasure in their confusion and taking responsibility in their reconstruction.

PDT certainly offers a range of possibilities for alternative ways of thinking about and representing the subject – from the notion of the machinic assemblage as offered by Deleuze and Guattari, to exploration of alternative (and interrelated) constructs like the posthuman, cyborg subject. Lepage (2008: 138) argues that a society saturated by technology and media ultimately encourages rejection of fixed models of subjectivity as both inadequate and inaccurate when they are placed against lived human experience. She offers instead the model of the posthuman: "a being ontologically indiscrete and hybrid: a human-technology cyborg." This might manifest itself in PDT in several ways: from the inclusion of the prosthetic body through to a: "materialistic and embodied ontology where consciousness, formally the foundation of the human subject, is rendered epiphenomenal, a 'bit part' in a larger system of cognitive distribution" (138). Posthuman perspectives, according to Hayles, depict a state where there is no difference or absolute demarcation between: "bodily existence and computer simulation, cybernetic mechanism and biological organism, robot teleology and human goals" (1992: 2-3). The posthuman subject is not a psychologised

³⁶ A radical, technology-based overhaul of the concept of subjectivity is proposed by Haraway in *A Cyborg Manifesto* (1991), who produces a constructive argument for the interfacing of humans and technology as an opportunity to rethink both subjectivity and agency in radical but ethically responsible ways. She states – "we are all chimeras, theorized and fabricated hybrids of machine and organism; in short, we are cyborgs" (150). Haraway's focus is upon the "permanent partiality" (173) of boundaries and, as an imaginative resource, the notion of the cyborg offers the prospect of taking pleasure in the confusion of boundaries and of taking responsibility in their construction (150). The cyborg is a kind of "disassembled and reassembled, post-modern collective and personal self" (163). She identifies the ongoing persistence of dualisms in the domination of the Other within society – and the potential for high tech culture to challenge these dualisms through "powerful infidel heteroglossia" (181). "It means both building and destroying machines, identities, categories, relationships, space stories" resulting in the deconstruction of all subjectivity. Post-modern agency potentially might involve, therefore, an "active grappling with partiality, technological interfacing and hybridization" (Hall 2004: 122); all of which are significant aspects of the potential aesthetic palette of PDT.

subject for it foregrounds the body of the performer and is “separated from any illusion of an essential identity of self. Bodies are coded and identities recognised according to what the body does, not what it is” (142). The concept of the posthuman subject effectively disintegrates any differentiation between reality and virtuality: “there are only ceaseless and singular becomings which form repeated machinic assemblages.”

This discussion of points of convergence between PDT and concepts of authenticity in relation to aspects of subjectivity proves to be a particularly conducive one in relation to its application throughout this project. The case studies of Part Two each concern themselves with aspects of subjectivity in relation to both their young performers and adult spectators. Subjectivity is often depicted as a consequence of power relations and the reciprocal relationship between child performer and adult spectator is often emphasised to establish a live metaphor of the power play at work in the subjection of the child. There are examples of young people making direct intervention into the techniques that facilitate the operation of mechanisms of power in acts of resistance whereby they overtly critique prescribed versions of subjectivity and stake out territory for their own explorations of individuality. Additionally, many of the case studies offer alternative possibilities for thinking about and representing the subject – from images of the nomadic subject, through to depictions of machine-like subjectivity in generative networks of flow. Part Three’s consideration of a radical pedagogy of PDT capitalises upon these approaches to subjectivity by encouraging a critique of concepts of fixed subjectivity and simultaneously exploring and embodying alternative, more critical and unorthodox modes of subjectivity.

SPECTATORS

I conclude this depiction of the potential overlay between concepts of PDT and notions of authenticity with a brief discussion of ‘spectators’ as this provides a foundational premise for my first-hand spectator accounts of examples of PDT performed by children and teenagers in Part Two, and to the way in which the participating student performer is positioned within my approach to a radical pedagogy of PDT in Part Three. I begin by reflecting on Lehmann’s observations on the post-dramatic spectator, one who becomes enveloped by multiple and simultaneous experiences and messages, who is required to conduct spectatorship with an open and fragmenting perception. I argue that the post-dramatic spectator subsequently has creative responsibility for threading together all the elements of a theatrical event and that this finds particular explication in Rancière’s depiction of heterogeneous spectator response. This provides a proposed model for the student performer within a radical pedagogy of PDT who is the individual reader of a text and is supported to undergo their own intellectual and creative exploits in relation to it. I introduce the idea that employment of techniques of collage, montage and fragment in constructing post-dramaturgy produces in-between and dissonant spaces which have potential as innovative pedagogical sites because of the way in which they require urgent negotiation by both performer and spectator. I establish ways in which both performer and spectator in PDT share the same reality and that with this comes a perceived immediacy in which the two parties acknowledge one another. Finally, I recognise the way in which the post-dramatic spectator subsequently shifts perception between frames of reality and fictionality, and how this becomes a problem to purposefully exploit and experience.

Lehmann’s discussions on post-dramatic spectatorship focus upon reception of

the ambiguous, multi-faceted, simultaneous and instantaneous; a distinct modification to the reception of ordered and comprehensive theatrical realities that might be more associated with the dramatic paradigm. He observes that within PDT “synthesis is cancelled. It is explicitly combated” which demands “an open and fragmenting perception in place of a unifying and closed perception” (82). Strategies that, for example, immerse the spectator in an abundance of simultaneous signs might well mimic the pandemonium of everyday reality for: “an authentic manner in which theatre could testify to life cannot come about through imposing an artistic macrostructure that constructs coherence” (83). The sensations arising from mirroring the chaos of the real are, in many ways, an enhanced manifestation of the present-ness of PDT: being enveloped in simultaneity, constantly overloaded and never able to possibly process all that is contained within a singular performance work or moment. Such a theatrical atmosphere depicts a hyper-reality capturing the sensations of contemporary day-to-day existence in a way that the more formal exposition of narrative typically associated with the dramatic paradigm never really can.

When enveloped by the ambiguous, multi-faceted, simultaneous and instantaneous, the post-dramatic spectator must attempt to process all that surrounds them by making their own choices in terms of selection and structuring which is, in effect, an abandonment of the reception of performance as a fixed totality replaced by the “liberating possibility of an on-going (re)writing, imagination and recombination” (88). PDT necessitates active engagement with both material and event, the spectator having creative responsibility to respond to the fragmented stimulus of their environment whilst simultaneously struggling to create unity from it (84). The ensuing community of “heterogeneous and particular imaginations” finds explication within

Rancière's *The Emancipated Spectator* (2009).³⁷ In this essay, Rancière embraces the notion of heterogeneous spectator response, arguing that "spectators see, feel and understand something in as much as they compose their own poem" (14) - so investing them with independent creative interpretative powers that mirror the more obviously aligned creative roles within theatrical production. There is something here to be drawn out later, in unravelling the role of the student performer within a radical pedagogy of PDT in exactly these terms: making them the active, interpretive readers and spectators of a text, each sharing their own "unique individual adventures" in response to it.

The impact of this is felt in the retreat of synthesis in post-dramaturgy which, according to Lehmann, results in stage discourses that come to "resemble the structure of dreams, and seem to tell of the dream world of their creators" (84) resulting in a non-hierarchical use of images, movements and words: a texture that "resembles collage, montage and fragment rather than a logically structured course of events" in a model of the non-hierarchical theatre aesthetic inherited from Surrealism.³⁸ Employing the techniques of collage, montage and fragment in constructing post-dramaturgy has potential to create intense disparity within the fabric of a performance work that requires immediate reflexivity on behalf of both the performer and spectator, enabling something like the actual experience of the everyday in such a way that its "disparate and idiosyncratic fragments resist coalescing into a unifying whole" (Garoian &

³⁷ Rancière argues for a theatre without spectators "where those in attendance learn from as opposed to being seduced by images; where they become active participants as opposed to passive voyeurs" (4). The reinvented spectator must "be shown a strange, unusual spectacle, a mystery whose meaning he must seek out" (4) which will result in exchanging the position of passive spectator for "that of scientific investigator or experimenter, who observes phenomena for the causes..."(4).

³⁸ Artaud had already presented an argument for the inclusion of dream images within theatrical production. Within his first manifesto for the Theatre of Cruelty in *The Theatre and its Double* he demands "giving words approximately the importance they have in dreams" (1958: 94) by drawing upon hieroglyphic characters that can be transcribed and read.

Gaudelius 2008: 54). This forcibly produces in-between spaces where knowledge becomes undecidable and mutable, with opportunities arising for creative and political intervention and production (92). These in-between, dissonant spaces have potential to become innovative pedagogical sites because of the way they can function as borderlands requiring intricate negotiation and navigation in making processes (the performer) and the live moment of performance (spectator).

The idea of a post-dramatic spectator as a present participant whose co-presence is acknowledged within the present time of the theatre event has already emerged within this discussion. Occupying the immediate and shared time of performance means that both performer and spectator democratically endure the same reality, and with this comes a perceived immediacy that is not always apparent when there are more explicit layers of representation mediating interconnection between the two - it is a relationship that Fischer-Lichte describes as the "bodily co-presence of actors and spectators" (2008: 38). Lehmann claims that this "co-presence" is always a paradoxical process in which it is not clear whether presence is given to the performer or whether the spectators produce it in the first place (2006: 141). He argues that the actor is not an object, but a co-presence in the sense of being an unavoidable implication of the spectator (142). The two are undividable and acknowledge one another in a way that encourages spectator identification with the present subject.

Within this co-relation, spectator perception is inevitably set into a state of constant modification as it shifts continually between an acute sense of reality and a sense of the constructed-ness of the event. In traversing the boundaries between reality and fictionality, the spectator might experience a "deliberate suspension of the clear line between reality (where, for instance, the observation of violence leads to feelings of responsibility and the need to intervene) and 'spectatorial event'" (103). Where there

is deliberate suspension of what might have once seemed like a clear line between reality and event: “when the real asserts itself against the staged on stage, then this is mirrored in the auditorium” and the division between theatrical reality and fiction becomes a problem to purposefully exploit and experience:

When the staging practice forces the spectators to wonder whether they should react to the events on stage as fiction (i.e. aesthetically) or as reality (for example, morally), theatre’s treading of the borderline of the real unsettles this crucial predisposition of the spectators: the unreflected certainty and security in which they experience being spectators as an unproblematic social behaviour.

(104)

In providing a foundational premise to my first-hand spectator accounts of examples of PDT performed by young people in Part Two, this brief discussion on post-dramatic spectatorship in relation to concepts of authenticity suggests a requirement to take creative and intellectual responsibility in making sense of simultaneous experiences and messages; of modification of the role of the spectator to incorporate a degree of agency in mapping one’s own experiences. Many of the works cited shift concerns of subject formation to the adult spectator in the auditorium by, for example, using young performers as a mirror to develop critical distance to the modes of subjectivity adults have assumed and continue to adopt in their own lives. The discussion has particularly made emphasis of the way in which the post-dramatic spectator is required to shift perception between frames of reality and fictionality - an aspect that is interlaced into the fabric of many of the examples cited, for example where the adult spectator is purposefully misled to respond to constructed provocative acts of teenage performers in a moral sense, and then required to reflect on what is being received as an entirely aesthetic construction. Additionally, this brief discussion has made emphasis of the way in which the participating student performer is specifically positioned within my approach to a radical pedagogy of PDT in Part Three

– as the individual reader of a performance text who is supported to undertake their own creative and intellectual interventions in relation to it. In Part Three’s depiction of an approach to a radical pedagogy of PDT, I argue that student performers can be positioned as the active, interpretive, primary readers and spectators of the performance text and what the actual spectators of a performance subsequently come to spectate, is the dynamic relation of spectatorship which is a pedagogical relation in itself.

GOING FORWARD

It is clear from this initial discussion that notions of authenticity inform the practice of PDT in myriad ways – as is evidenced here by the various productive intersections that have emerged in relation to notions of post-dramatic realities, bodies, subjectivities and spectators. Specific consideration of notions of authenticity within the frame of PDT provides the foundation for a fuller understanding of how PDT might operate as a counter-apparatus for radical pedagogy – particularly because of the way in which it reveals how and why such a counter-apparatus might particularly regard concepts of subjectivation and representation as key concerns in the generation of critical frames that might make transparent and interrupt constructs of the real, so striving to make discernible the social categories within which the participants of a radical pedagogy find themselves operating. The scrutiny of notions of subjectivity emerges here as a significant component of the critical palette of PDT - offering a creative landscape where the contemporary fetish of self can be scrutinised, and in which all the partiality of post-modern manifestations of subjectivity can be celebrated and embodied. This approach is exactly the necessary territory of a radical pedagogy that seeks to dig down to the roots of how we learn to be subjects, to reveal how we might resist those processes, and subsequently how we might explore alternative

possibilities for the formation of subjectivity. Such a focus enhances the potential for exploration of more unorthodox depictions of subjectivity – to begin to creatively "seize, enhance and reinvent" alternative modes of self-representation that avoid the transformation of subjectivity into "a rigid collective apparatus at the exclusive service of the powers that be" (Bourriaud 2001: 89). Additionally, I have argued that in forever extinguishing its own present-ness, PDT becomes a site in which representational practice is both adhered to and rigorously deconstructed - since PDT always enforces the failure of its own representational systems whilst simultaneously ensuring that representation remains its integral ally. In inhabiting an indeterminate zone between claims of truth and fictionality, PDT can begin to draw upon de-representational techniques that ensure that the mechanisms of representation are always extended in a deconstructive sense. Consideration of notions of authenticity serve as a vital reminder of the oppositional intent of PDT – of the potential for application of meticulously deconstructive tactics that strive to prise apart the intertwined formations of reality that both a performance text and theatrical frame come to represent.

PART TWO

CREATIVE WORKS

Part Two offers a collection of first-hand spectator accounts of post-dramatic works that each locate children and teenagers at their core. These works are Victoria's *üBUNG* (2003), Rimini Protokoll's *Airport Kids* (2008), Ontroerend Goed's *Once and For All We're Going to Tell You Who We Are So Shut Up and Listen* (2008), Victoria's *That Night Follows Day* (2009), Ontroerend Goed's *Teenage Riot* (2010), Mammalian Diving Reflex's *Haircuts by Children* (2010), Campo/Gob Squad's *Before Your Very Eyes* (2012), Ontroerend Goed's *All That is Wrong* (2013) and Boris Charmatz's *L'Enfant* (2014). These accounts have a double function within the context of this

project: i) on one hand providing underpinning field research aiming to deepen response to the question of how notions of authenticity might inform the practice of PDT, and ii) they are simultaneously mobilised to identify preliminary ideas that can be taken forward in formulating an approach to PDT as a counter-apparatus for radical pedagogy in practice.

Within these works, we encounter many strategies to destabilise concepts of authentic-ness, real-ness and present-ness; and that purposefully deconstruct representational mechanisms, many of which exploit young people's bodies as instruments of de-representation. We see common commitment to the collaborative development of critical frames on reality and emergence of the child/teenager as a figure of resistance within that. There is sometimes outright rejection of dominant modes of subjectivation in favour of more fragmented, partial and alternative approaches. There is often a keen focus on the futurity and potentiality of the child/teenager –particularly in antithesis to the figure of the adult. What specifically emerges in these accounts through its mode of narration is the way in which each of the works capitalises upon the specific power relations inherent to the child performer/adult spectator relation, and how this more often than not shifts concerns of subjectivity into the auditorium as the adult spectator comes to play a key role in the construction of their own subjectivity through exploration of “new ways of being together” (Bourriaud 2002: 91). Through the active co-creation of the performance text the adult spectator becomes “empowered to play a key authoring role in the construction of their own subjectivity” (Tomlin 2013: 180).

Title: *üBUNG* by Victoria (Josse de Pauw)
Location: Chapter Arts Centre, Cardiff (co-presented by the Centre for Performance Research as part of its *Voice Works* programme).³⁹
Who: Six children aged 10 to 15
When: 6th November 2003

üBUNG, from the German meaning ‘practice’ or ‘exercise,’ takes as its subject Flemish bourgeois society. In this “very bleak”⁴⁰ work, six children are the intermediaries of a black and white film depicting a dinner party for a group of adults in an extravagant home. On-screen, the passing of narrative time is marked by the effect of the adults’ consumption of alcohol and, as tension mounts, arguments and hidden sexual desires emerge as the adults begin to say and do as they really think. Meanwhile, the on-stage children, dressed as scaled-down versions of the on-screen adults, simultaneously provide the lip-synched dialogue and sound effects of the muted film, accompanied with disjointed and at times alienating attempts to recreate its key actions.

On-screen, at the start of *üBUNG*, there is a middle-aged, middle-class couple sat in adjacent high-backed armchairs. He stares vacantly into the fireplace whilst she sits, chin in hand and lost in thought, her eyes fixed on nothing in the opposite direction. The shot briefly lingers on a vacant three-seated sofa where perhaps they once sat in earlier, younger and more convivial days. Silence. Their estranged body language suggests acute disconnection and despondence. An on-stage child expertly provides a musical soundscape on violin, serving to embellish the tension within the

³⁹ This spectator account is supplemented by more recent access to a recording of the original held in the Centre for Performance Research DVD library.

⁴⁰ Etchells. Personal Correspondence: 2012

on-screen room. The man glances at his valuable watch; she adjusts her expensive twin-set and pearls - and still they do not speak. There are prolonged close-ups of all the acquisitions and validations of middle-class living: antiques, gadgets, technologies, art and other acquired bourgeois paraphernalia. A still frame gives the on-screen narrative time as 16.57. There is live on-stage laughter as the muted on-screen guests arrive to be greeted with that learnt empty gesture of intimacy, the kiss on cheek, the sound of which the children produce on-stage with intricate synchronicity. All this time, the children remain in semi-darkness at the furthest parameters of the theatre space, gradually acquiring scaled-down replica costumes of their on-screen adult counterparts; their imitated gestures, despite their synchronicity, seem haphazardly selected from the on-screen adult behaviours. It is a little like those early stages of learning a language where only vital words and phrases are confidently articulated and fluent sentence structure is largely absent.⁴¹

When *üBUNG*'s child performers replicate the gestures and spoken language of their celluloid counterparts, the corporeal deed of copying hinders them from ever individualising or fleshing out their roles and their energies seem to be channelled instead into their reproduction of the adult behaviours on film and into the virtuosity of their mimicry. There is certainly something of the virtuoso in the performances of these children, a sense of them achieving the impossible in the perfection that they bring to the performance of their roles, their mastery of instruments, voices and bodies in synchronisation with the original. According to Brandstetter, the virtuoso is: "is a

⁴¹ Klaic (2002:17) makes a useful comparison of this generational theatrical device to Roger Vitrac's *Victor, ou Les enfants au pouvoir* (1928) in which adult actors play children, who in turn play their parents and their parents' adult friends in a radical caricature of bourgeois decorum and normalcy. Klaic also refers to Biljana Srbljanovic's more recent *Family Stories: Belgrade* (Porodične Priče) in which adult actors play children who act out the opportunism and cowardice of their parents during the Milošević era, so providing a mirroring technique that sharpens critical stance.

magician whose actions appear to contravene the boundaries of the physically possible while at the same time concealing from delighted audiences the nature of his transgression” (2007: 178). The nature of their intricate synchronicity with the original film can be neatly encapsulated by many of the concepts typically employed in depicting the virtuoso: particularly the supernatural, the magical or the machine (179). An acute sense of authenticity emerges in their performance, for it is “an unsurpassable event, it can only authenticate itself.” Additionally, the virtuosity of the accuracy of their mimicry hints towards concealment of their rigorous labour prior to the performance event.

When their virtuosity results in the faultless synthesis of muted on-screen moving mouth and live spoken word, it is rather like that inconspicuous second when I watch a subtitled film and my own reception of moving image and mediated language becomes entirely naturalised. They seem to perform their copied physical and verbal acts without ever attributing any further interpretation or parody to the prototypes, which results in a sterile mimicry of the adults’ behaviours; this seems, at first glance anyway, to be undertaken with no resistance or reframing of the original whatsoever. At times, there emanates a dismal inevitability that they will someday become the largely abhorrent and self-obsessed adult beings that are depicted on-screen.

However, by never quite assimilating what they are learning, they manage to remain disassociated from the iniquitous intent of the on-screen figures. When they do set about emulating the behaviours of their adult counterparts, it is largely within the isolated quarantine of this laboratorial theatrical exercise and performed to complete abstraction. In isolation, with often minimal interaction with their peers, their cloned gestures seem abstract and nonsensical but, when re-affiliated back to the adults’ original actions, seem to provide affirmation that the cinematically depicted behaviours

and trappings of bourgeois living that are represented are inconsequential. The virtuosity of these young peoples' performances, specifically in relation to their synchronicity of gesture, spoken language and musical accompaniment, produces a fluctuating ambiguity as to whether the adults are steering them, or whether they are, in fact, steering the adults. At times this interrelationship feels rather ambiguous.

The time on screen reads 19.00 hours as the film shifts to the adults' preparations for dinner. Copious shots of vodka are poured and consumed and the mood shifts significantly, which results in laughter and more laughter. The earlier disjointed and awkward adult relations become rapidly replaced with fluid and buoyant conversation as the effect of copious amounts of alcohol discernibly affects their behaviours. The on-stage children subsequently become more animated as they don clothing mimicking the adults in complete miniature form. As they come further into the performance space, they seem at once connected and disconnected and fleeting interrelationships are glimpsed as they momentarily address each other in dialogue. As the live on-stage activity intensifies, the two-dimensionality of the monotone film serves to augment the, by contrast, lavish three-dimensional colour of the children: alluding perhaps to a temporal framing which, in very elementary terms, I perceive as their taking from the past to inform and fabricate their own potential futures.

Looking closer, I sense that there is, in fact, a far more elaborate temporal loop in operation here that exceeds any simple trajectory from past to future, for it is always in a synchronous state of fast forward and rewind; these may be the adults that these children will become, but they are simultaneously the children that these adults once

were.⁴² As they dispense their dexterous, seemingly extemporaneous and sober performances as themselves, the children provide a sharp focus of quasi-reality in opposition to the artificial representational backdrop of the film, so inducing a concept of adulthood as vacuous, grotesque and superficial.⁴³ According to Klaic, the ‘real’ presence of these children against the mimetic filmic backdrop effectively works to discredit “the systematic lies, ridiculous social rituals, and inept transgression of idiotic norms and conventions” (2002: 83) of the adult world and results in the entire frame of adulthood being simply and superbly undermined. Their replication of the adult on-screen behaviours feels like a concerted effort to fill the void created by the absence of any real sense, meaning or feeling on behalf of the adults. However, the automated way in which the children perform their acts often deprives them of any individuality whatsoever, resulting in their endorsement as slave apprentices to both the behaviours they reproduce and, likewise, to the representational apparatus at work within this theatrical event.

What emerges here, I think, is a somewhat competitive dynamic between the

⁴² Kear argues: “On the one hand, the children appear to be witnesses to the narrative of mimetic rivalry and marital infidelity that the film as a representation of bourgeois life seems to incorporate them into {...} on the other, they seem in their very presence to embody the absence of children from the adults’ lives, representing the off-spring they never had as much as the infant lost inside. The stage might in this sense function as the space of the film’s memory and longing – although they exist in fact simultaneously – or vice versa, as the moment of its historical prefiguring. The children are in this sense witnessing what they themselves will become, their adult roles and relationships prescribed as the determinate effects of mimetic identification” (2005: 28-29).

⁴³ This might be further elucidated by the way in which Sartre seems particularly drawn to those alienated by society, viewing social marginality as offering an independence not available to those confined by established norms. To hold the label of marginality, he argues, offers a freedom that is not available to the general population at large. If bad faith and inauthenticity are required to support the dominant group’s image of itself, then those excluded from this may have a greater chance to achieve authenticity (2003: 253). However, mere membership of a marginal group does not automatically provide a straightforward path to authenticity - the social positions of certain groups simply mean that they are more likely to see through the societal distortions created by bad faith. The idea of social marginality providing a clarity of vision that can cut through the distortions of bad faith seems to have some relevance when applied to the children and teenagers of *üBUNG* who, by emulating the behaviours of their adult counterparts to complete abstraction, provide firm confirmation that all the cinematically depicted behaviours and trappings of adult bourgeoisie living are simply trivial and insignificant.

actual modes of the child and adult performances that emphasises the children's liminal mode of performance: they are left to inhabit a rather difficult territory somewhere between the poles of traditional, psychological approaches to dramatic representation and a starker exposure of the body's materiality within the live performance frame. The foregrounding of their presence and their synchronous challenge to representational processes ensures that representation is prised apart to reveal its contradictions, cracks and embedded interrelationships with power. This effectively puts into practice processes of de-representation through the simultaneous construction and dismantling of the representational apparatus at work as part of a more radical project that relocates both the young performer and adult spectator to a critical terrain beyond mere make-believe.⁴⁴

The on-screen narrative time reads as 23.00 hours. There has been a post-dinner recital of Dylan Thomas to which an on-screen adult has performed rather convoluted rehearsed gestures, all of which are reproduced with absolute precision by his on-stage doppelgänger child / *Though lovers be lost love shall not. And death shall have no dominion. And death shall have no dominion. Under the windings of the sea. They lying long shall not die windily. Twisting on racks when sinews give way* / The veneer of congenial middle-class living gradually dissolves as excessive consumption of alcohol annihilates the communication and behaviours of these adults who now become more like reckless, hysterical, children. A blonde woman stands on the table flaunting her underwear and, although not reproduced by the children as a physical action, the utter

⁴⁴ In his discussion of *üBUNG*, Quick identifies the way in which the interrupted time of the children's mimetic play is different from the time of the represented adult world out of which those actions are derived. He argues that the way in which the children have the freedom to roam and move between different activities is denied to the adults on screen: "Their action is condemned to eternal repetition, which will make their gestures and words exactly the same in every performance" (2006: 155). In the childrens' performances, he identifies a "stop-start relationship to imitation, one that refuses to participate in the temporal, spatial and psychological continuity that is always implied in the film's order of representation." (157).

disapproval of her husband is. A man and woman dance together in an adjacent room, whilst their partners are left together in another. Eric Clapton plays / *It's late in the evening / She's wondering what clothes to wear / She puts on her make up / And brushes her long blonde hair / And then she asks me / Do I look alright / And I say yes, you look wonderful tonight* / The newly formed couple whirl around in each other's arms and the aloof and critical distance with which the children reproduce the adult behaviours, as isolated and disconnected actions against the ever disconcerting and disorientating POV shots, gives the children a sense of self-control that these adults simply do not ever have.

It can be argued perhaps that this work frames the child as the innocent other, whose body is soon to be colonised by becoming adult. In this, there is allusion to the position of the child within the adult centric discourse of developmental psychology, of unidirectional development through effective socialisation towards the predestined goal of 'becoming adult' and a fully operative member of society - discourse which Grieshaber (2004) links to various techniques of surveillance combined with the regulation and training of bodies employed in colonial rule to convert the 'savage' to the 'civilized' body (66). Within *üBUNG*, there is additionally a nod perhaps towards Piaget's (1967) universal and ordered approach to the understanding of children with its focus on the child as existing in a state of not yet being, a "human becoming" rather than a "human being" (Qvortrup 1994: 4). Canella (1997) points to the way in which the scientific discourse of children and child-centred pedagogy limits how we understand young people and subsequently produces the idea of adults as always more privileged than children – arguing for a post-structuralist approach that questions the notion of predetermined, universal childhoods requiring experiences determined by scientific discovery and by human beings who are older. Positioning adults and

children in fixed opposition to each other largely fails to take account of the complex ways power is exercised between people. Foucault states:

[T]he fact that I am older than you, and that you may initially have been intimidated, may be turned around during the course of our own conversation, and I may end up being intimidated before someone precisely because he is younger than I am.

(1997: 292)

The power relations between adults and children may be unpredictable, erratic and frequently reversed. Indeed, Gallagher argues that a more “fruitful tactic” for breaching the divide between adults and children might be to focus on the incompetencies of adults:

beings who are always becoming, developing, transforming; whose intentions have no special privilege in the world of social action; and whose agency is always indebted to the forms of disciplinary subjection which have moulded them into autonomous individuals.

(2008: 240)

üBUNG’s adults never quite meet their responsibilities as agents for effective socialisation and, subsequently, the adult/child binary becomes radically undermined as the on-stage child emerges as the *effectual* other. Becoming adult is turned on its discourse head and depicted instead as a passage from *being civilized* to *being savage*.

POV shots continue to track the on-screen couple who now whirl around in each other’s arms, repeatedly turning and looking into each other’s eyes and into my eyes as, intoxicated, they sing to each other and directly to me / *And I say yes, I feel wonderful tonight. I feel wonderful. Because I see the love light in your eyes* / A woman has her head on the table and is in hysterics, crying and wailing in an act of drunken self-indulgence / *It's time to go home now. And I've got an aching head. So, I give her the car keys* / The dancing couple collapse abruptly to the ground behind the table / *She helps me to bed. And then I tell her. As I turn out the light. I say my darling, you were wonderful tonight* / And with this, the adult behaviours disintegrate to a new all time

low: newly formed couples kiss passionately, there are tears and wailing, haphazard and distressing behaviours, a violent affray between two men, an attempted suffocation, two men falling into a pond, and eventually the violent destruction of many of the objects of middle class attainment against which the on-stage children continue to surface within a frame of innocence that is firmly set against these ill-adjusted adults. And still the children do not re-enact the adult behaviour in its totality or depict the on-screen physical interrelationships, still working largely in isolation which frames their acts with a somewhat disjointed and unnerving effect. Additionally, their mediation of the celluloid adults fashions a mirror to the adult spectators and, at least briefly, I find myself reflecting on my own subjecting behaviours that might have ever had any affect on any child's becoming adult.

As these children theatrically impersonate the on-screen adult bourgeois behaviours, their "stylized repetition of acts" (Butler 1990: 191) identifies them as the novice components of a governed system of performances built on an attempt to duplicate behaviours and, subsequently, the naturalised apparatus of a system that forcefully governs both bodies and subjectivities is exposed through its direct facsimile: the machine of the theatrical event itself. Whilst the on-screen adult figures always very much remain the characters enacted by the well-known Flemish actors who play them,⁴⁵ their behaviours always have a somewhat histrionic effect when juxtaposed with the live, instantaneous and no-nonsense approach of the child performers. This creates an acute counterpoint that shifts into sharp focus the façade of naturalness of the adults' own acts, gestures and desires. The children's enacting/copying/mediating seems to engender them with critical distance from the illusion of any kind of

⁴⁵ Josse de Pauw, Carly Wijs, Dirk Roofthoof, Lies Pauwels, Bernard Van Eeghem and George Van Dam.

essentialist identity (with which the on-screen adult actors are engaged) and what is instead theatrically promoted is iterative behaviour performed within an enforced framework of bourgeois normativity. At work here is a brutal and boundless theatre machine within which there proves to be little scope for subversion of the derivative acts, gestures and desires of these adult figures.

On-screen, the enormous pressure to maintain commonly held interpretations of adult bourgeois identity results in a complete failure of all social relations. For the children performing the (re)iterative acts there is always a constant threat of public social punishment/humiliation within the context of the live performance that might result from failing to enact/copy/mediate the relentless temporal motion of the film. If there is subversion of any kind, it lies in the fact that the children's mimicry is always undertaken with disconnection and, unlike their unseemly adult counterparts, that they always manage to retain a sense of dignity, largely by rarely entering and reproducing the on-screen interrelationships. Their mostly disconnected physical and vocal acts are never quite successful in referring to or (re)constructing the adult "I" and consequently reveal identity as an ideal that is never accomplished, always repeated as part of an endless cycle within which iteration demands reiteration but induces failure as a condition of that demand. Both the presence and action of these on-stage children effectively lifts the illusory veil of naturalisation that surrounds all identity; they are simultaneously Generation X, Y and Z, within which there is not a sense of as copy is to the original, but rather a sense of "as copy is to copy" (Butler 2006: 43).

It is the morning after the night before, and the on-screen adults go for a morning walk in the woods. As they do so, the on-stage children acquire precise miniature sets of the adults' outdoors clothing and, for the first time, they come physically together in the centre of the theatre space. They face the spectator and are

expressionless. In this singular moment, the ever-shifting temporal logic of these children - as synchronously the children that these adults once were and their own children/our children/any children - is captured and confirmed. In their deepening stillness, these children might seem to succumb to embodying these adults and I certainly have the depressing sense that they will now use what they have learnt in their own adult lives. For, up until this moment, the rift between the copy and the ever-present original copy was always apparent through its abstraction. In this moment of total amalgamation, the children seem to finally interrelate and embody their adult counterparts without any degree of resistance, abstraction or critical distance. In this precise moment, it seems that the hitherto resisted intellectual and corporeal synthesis of adult and child has been attained which results in an extremely bleak image that depicts the utter inevitability of reproducing inherited behaviours. However, as they continue to stand there still, the image deepens further and, in their impotentiality, I simultaneously begin to read the prospects for their potentiality. As the children begin to slowly remove their replica adult clothing and exit the intermedial machine of this theatre space, I am left with a sense that perhaps they may in fact exhaust their own impotentiality, to utter "I can" (Agamben 1999: 178).



Figure 4: *üBUNG*. (Source: Phile Deprez)



Figure 5: *üBUNG*. (Source: Phile Deprez)



Figure 6: *üBUNG*. (Source: Phile Deprez)

Title: *Airport Kids* by Rimini Protokoll (Lola Arias and Stefan Kaegi)
Location: HAU Hebbel am Ufer, Berlin ⁴⁶
Who: Eight global nomads aged 8 to 14
When: 24th October 2008

In 2007 eight international children aged between seven and thirteen years old began a performance collaboration with performance makers Lola Arias and Stefan Kaegi of Rimini Protokoll that was to investigate their experiences of existing within a third culture. Each of these eight children were the offspring of high income, international business managers for companies like Philip Morris, Nestlé and Tetra Pac in Lausanne. They had each followed their parents endlessly around the world and, in the work, talk very casually of both making and losing friends, of always having to rapidly adapt to their present circumstances and leave behind previously established relations. Each speaks several languages, and all of them unite in a search for a utopia of their own. These children are containable, transportable and entirely nomadic.

They each inhabit individual air freight containers which house intricately personalised environments. Each container becomes a substitute for home; a space in which each of them keep some of their most prized possessions. There is comparison to be made here with the caravans of the nomad, that move largely interrupted across state and political lines. These children embody disconnection and fragmentation; their presence effectively disassembling perceived notions of unity, hierarchy, identity and subjectivity. Their containers are often in motion, being shifted and rearranged;

⁴⁶ My own half - remembered account of this work is supplemented by a full video recording of the work available on Rimini Protokoll's website: Rimini Protokoll, *Airport Kids*. [Website] Available from: http://www.rimini-protokoll.de/website/en/project_3479.html [24th May 2015]

personalised, mobile spaces from within which they can narrate their own stories by sharing intimate details of their pasts and their utopian visions for their futures. An accompanying soundscape of aircraft arriving and departing conjures up the transient space of the airport, reflecting perhaps the indefiniteness of their present situations and the multiplicity of their potential destinations. Their rather peculiar liminal presence conjures up a utopian freedom of passage that many world inhabitants simply never have access to.

These *Airport Kids* consider themselves as culture-less - they are Indian, Indonesian, Romanian, Brazilian, Moroccan, Irish, Angolan, French Canadian and Chinese, yet all live presently in Switzerland. They might technically be known as Third-Culture-Kids, Trans-Culture-Children or World Nomads, having spent their lives to date within cultures and countries to which they do not belong. They are required to always be prepared to move on, accept change and dislocate themselves from their pasts. These are some of the few privileged and prosperous refugees of the Twenty-First century who construct and inhabit their own micro-culture that allows them to journey across political and state borders as nomadic figures of resistance. This nomadic existence indicates a crisis of identity: the impossibility of establishing any consistent notion of self due to the necessity to constantly adapt, chameleon-like, to new and changing surroundings. When, in the performance, they are confronted by sociological depictions of themselves within an academic publication, they proceed to rip out its pages, screw them into balls and propel them violently into the auditorium with a tennis racquet. Whilst they have had little option in becoming nomad, they reject outright any depictions of their subjectivity imposed on them by the academic adult. The act of ripping up the academic journal in which they feature reads like an act of resistance that rejects any sociological research into their world - defiantly making a

stake for their own individuality away from any prescribed versions that might be offered by adults.

Each of their personalised containers is interconnected by a rudimentary Skype-like camera system. Both the containers and the children within them are frequently in transit, lifted through the space using pulley systems, conveyor belts and pallet lifts, or settled down to form the horizon of a city or the stage for a rock band. One air freight container opens to reveal a striped wallpapered interior and a girl of perhaps eleven or twelve sat, cross legged, holding a tennis racquet. She introduces herself / *My name is Kristina. And in the future, I would like to be a tennis player* / Emerging slowly from her container, she comes forward to the spectators / *I was born in Krasnodar in Russia. I moved to Moscow when I was 4. And finally, I arrived in Switzerland when I was 7. I move a lot because of the work of my father...my father works for Philip Morris. When I move, I have to start everything from the beginning. And...it seems like I'm being born again: when I move I have to learn a different language, be a different person* / Her inclusion of autobiographical content makes it difficult to decipher between what is real and what is fictional, or what has been creatively extended beyond its initial telling. It evokes that unsettling through indecidability that Lehmann speaks of, when one is uncertain as to whether one is dealing with reality or fiction (2006: 101). These elements of shared personal history, along with the personal artefacts that are presented, serve to pull the performance into sharp focus by providing an authentication of the real. Whilst the presence of these actual *Airport Kids* ⁴⁷ provides what Jackson identifies as “the kind of naturalised authenticity that make audiences feel that they are

⁴⁷ Rimini Protokoll have a track record of working with amateur performers as ‘experts’ – this has included the elderly, teenagers, unemployed air traffic controllers, mayoral candidates, Vietnam soldiers, long distance lorry drivers and Indian call centre workers (http://www.rimini-protokoll.de/website/en/project_5881.html).

in the midst of the real” (2011: 242) their existence strikes me at the same time as being entirely inauthentic.

Kristina hits an imaginary tennis ball into the auditorium with her prized tennis racquet, accompanied by a sound effect of the imaginary ball being hit. She articulates a long list of her losses to date / *My best friend Anna* / she hits imaginary tennis ball / *two pairs of sneakers* / she hits imaginary tennis ball / *one tennis racquet* / she hits imaginary tennis ball / *some Russian words that I can't remember anymore* / she hits imaginary tennis ball / *the view from my window* / she hits imaginary tennis ball / *the smell of gas in the streets* / she hits imaginary tennis ball / *my nana Tatjana and her book of mathematics* / she hits imaginary tennis ball / *and my private corner* / she hits imaginary tennis ball / *Because in Russia I didn't have a room, so I had a small corner in the corner of the room ... and sometimes I build a room out of pillows so that no one can see me. And I really miss this small place* / There is a sense of these children being required to constantly reinvent themselves, always in transit to meet the demands of the new and changing contexts within which they are deposited. In some respects, these children embody facets of post-modern subjectivity: shifting their identities according to new circumstances, dislocating themselves from their own historicities to forge new identities that epitomise and embody fragmentation, disunity and (that side effect of neo-liberalism) intense isolation. However, they continue to find gaps within this in which to briefly mourn their past losses and past selves. Whilst Kristina's deadpan delivery seems to lack any emotional content, reading as it does like an entirely automated depiction of her past, an intense emotional intent is communicated within the repeated act and sound of hitting the tennis ball into the auditorium. She seems to avoid engaging emotionally with her own historicity to protect herself in her ever shifting present, but that frustration inevitably makes itself manifest elsewhere.

A freight container is rolled into the space. As it settles, a bespectacled boy of about seven or eight climbs slowly out of it and makes direct eye contact with spectators as he walks downstage. He introduces himself with all the formality of a business acquaintance / *My name is Oussama. My mother is Moroccan and my father is Swiss. They met in Switzerland. My mother is an esthetician. She knows a lot of important women, like the Princess of Saudi Arabia. Since the divorce of my parents, I'm the only man about the house. I sleep with a plastic revolver next to my bed so that I can defend my family* / There is a distinct sense that childhood has been forcibly bypassed for many of these children through not having being able to establish any kind of enduring social relation; that some of them have reverted instead into their own protective containers in which they seek shelter, protection and safety, and surround themselves with the artefacts of their past relations (such as photographs of family members and friends). These artefacts provide signifiers to real relationships and people that no longer occupy a present reality in their lives, providing authentication of the existence of a real elsewhere that they can no longer directly engage with because of their own socio-political displacement. At one point, a young girl says: / *I would like to show you the class that I was in last year* / and then, with a black marker pen, proceeds to deface the faces of all of those she has now lost contact with in the photograph, leaving just her own image / *and this is me right in the middle* / The effect is devastating.

Their inevitable need for belongingness never, of course, simply disappears when they are distracted by the need to respond to new and changing circumstances. It is partly met instead through a collaboration that is their own community - one that is governed by a depressing view of the world that they have evidently inherited from their particularly liminal perspective and the rules of their parents' business worlds.

Their marginality seems to offer them, at face value at least, a freedom not shared by many children of their age. If we are to believe Sartre's claim that the label of marginality offers a freedom not available to the general population at large (2003:173), it might seem that these children have an independence that is free of established norms. However, in an act of 'bad faith,' they generally mimic the behaviours of their parents to formulate their own society, one in which they have had the opportunity to ignore the parameters of state to design rules for their own day-to-day existence.

Despite having a perceived freedom to cross borders, these young people have only, in effect, recreated a miniature society that is based entirely upon the rules and regulations of their parents and guardians. There is sometimes a brattish-ness to this, a precociousness about their behaviours and the way in which they manage themselves, in the conventions they design and employ to make decisions amongst themselves, and in the adult language and terminology that they use with ease to define themselves and others. Despite the seemingly adult responsibilities that they assume and the way in which they present themselves, their childishness repeatedly emerges to undermine all that they attempt to set up and articulate.

They exist in a state of continual limbo that is exaggerated further by their peculiar perceptions of their own temporalities. Each is largely disconnected from their individual past and heritage and there is not any sense of them ever having had any integral and lasting role in any community - even in the one which they have set up here between themselves. In the absence of their own sense of historicity, they focus intently instead on their futures: futures which largely reproduce the roles carved out previously by their parents - along with more fanciful border-crossing idealism like plans to establish a Chinese community on Mars. The futility of their potential freedom

is most apparent when it is considered against the perspective of their overwhelming sense of abandonment and loneliness. They each turn to dictionary definitions of utopia to depict imagined societies whose realisation is largely impossible. Each takes the time to articulate their own vision of a utopian world – they vote in favour of developing a spoken utopian language, but against the introduction of new medicines to cure heart disease and AIDS that might result in everyone living until the age of ninety-nine. Their pursuit of utopia has all the fragility, idealism and contradiction of an Enlightenment search for authenticity. They describe Dubai as a utopian society for millionaires, depicting / *a floating ship that belongs to no country. This is the freedom ship. It has a gigantic duty-free shop so that you don't have to pay taxes to any country* / Personal freedom is interpreted by these children as consumer freedom and they subsequently confirm their tendency towards 'bad faith.'

At the conclusion of *Airport Kids*, the children perform a very discordant punk-like song in which they make extremely persuasive claims for their own futures / *In 20 years' time I'll be the boss / You'll be ill / Or you'll be dead / And I won't be afraid / I'll take revenge on those who mistreated me / In 20 year's time I'll vote / And decide your future / Of your business* / The bleak lyrics are clearly influenced by the brutality of the business practices of the role models that they learn from. As they rip everything up on stage, they start to extinguish their childlike perspectives and instead embody the harsher dreams and actions of the adults to which they largely aspire. And for me, it all leaves a very bitter taste. There is a black out and applause.



Figure 7: *Airport Kids* (Source: Rimini Protokoll)



Figure 8: *Airport Kids* (Source: Rimini Protokoll)

Title: *Once and For All We're Gonna Tell You Who We Are So Shut Up and Listen* by Ontroerend Goed (Alexander Devriendt)
Location: Traverse 2, Edinburgh
Who: Thirteen children and teenagers
When: 15th August 2008 ⁴⁸

There are thirteen chairs lined up in a neat row directly facing the auditorium. Thirteen children and teenagers are heard screaming, cheering and chatting off-stage. Lights fade and silence briefly dominates. A girl enters the space. She speaks directly to spectators but her words are generally incomprehensible. It goes something like / *Good evening, welcome / We are adolescents / I mind being called like that / I don't mind being called like that / whatever's in my mind / it's a cliché / by looking at us you have to start feeling old* / She exits in a trail of contorted and confused swearwords. She rapidly establishes that this work is about all the clichés and preconceptions of adolescence, particularly in terms of resistance, rebellion, testing parameters and obscenity. The Velvet Underground plays - *I'm Waiting for the Man*. One by one, each enters and takes their seat.

They swap chairs and suffer the abuse they receive. The boys do whatever the girls request. Two performers become interconnected with rope. Others crawl into a rubbish bag. They pretend to be killed by someone. Someone stuffs a plastic cup in their mouth. Someone airplanes with someone. Some are at a loss to know exactly what to do. Some mess around with others. Some write on the floor. One pretends to see their ex in the audience. They copy the image of the Last Supper. They smoke

⁴⁸ My account of this performance is supplemented by short extracts available on YouTube and Vimeo, along with a transcript of the performance provided in Ontroerend Goed's *All Work and No Plays* (2014).

cigarettes in the wings. One makes a water fountain with their mouth. They pretend to kill someone. One joyrides on a toy motorcycle. One hangs upside down. Some lean back on chairs. Some tumble backwards. Some pretend to be in pain. Someone French kisses someone. Others chill a little. Some crawl under a white sheet. They burp words. They blow up balloons and let them go. They make balloon genitalia. Someone compliments someone's balloon genitalia. They slap/get slapped. They pose for photo shoots. They wrestle. They win. They lose. Someone attempts to strip someone naked. Someone says 'dick' too many times. They confuse someone. Someone pushes away a skateboard. Someone skates on someone's back. Someone stuffs someone's mouth with stuff. Someone gets nervous with someone. They separate and are separated violently. They let someone run over them. They lie dead. They fight with someone. They are sarcastically sweet to someone. Someone pulls back a chair. They run away. They limbo dance. Someone says 'hello' to someone. Someone destroys something. Someone says */ I'm going to beat my mother /* Someone hits someone with a handbag. They wander around. They get lost in themselves. They intervene in fights. They hurt someone by accident. They force food into someone's mouth. They spit on the floor. They get what they want. They get someone's attention. Someone gives someone a massage. They have their picture taken by someone.

Someone strips for someone. Someone complains to someone. Someone roller-skates around. Someone becomes a cheerleader. Someone writes 'dick' on someone's forehead with lipstick. The girls remove their makeup. They hug someone. They stand on chairs. Someone is styled by someone. Someone sneezes. Someone is turned on by someone. Someone flaunts their naked torso. Someone waves at the spectators with their top. Someone disassembles and destroys a Barbie with a lighter. Someone is helpful to someone. Someone tries to make them self invisible. Someone is invisible.

Someone does some yoga. They build a pyramid with paper cups. They destroy the pyramid of plastic cups by kicking it. They put a Post-It Note on someone's back. They make a parachute for Barbie. They crave attention from spectators. Someone hangs on to someone. The girls check out the boys. They make a washing line. Someone is beaten by someone. Someone is angry at someone. They take photographs of spectators. They ruin a photo shoot. They pinch someone. They mess up a high five. They greet each other sarcastically. Someone instigates something. Someone bites someone's breasts and thighs. They stir up fights. They lie down. They pretend to clean up. They make faces. They make eyes at someone. Someone feels excluded. Someone is groped with pompoms. They rant at someone. Someone puts lipstick on a spectator's face. Someone is drawn out of their world. And then a klaxon sounds. They meticulously clean up the stage and exit the space. There is silence and an empty stage. In the chaos that has occurred, I have witnessed many of the clichés of adolescence, particularly all the cruelty, aggression, insecurities and fear that come with it. Then, in a striking coup de théâtre, they repeat the whole sequence again in finite detail - again, meticulously cleaning up the stage and exiting the space.⁴⁹

This opening sequence provides the foundation for the entirety of *Once and for All We're Gonna Tell You Who We Are So Shut Up and Listen*. It is referred to in the company's documentation of the show as the 'The Mother Sequence,' and is subsequently re-performed/adapted some thirteen or fourteen times within ever-changing frames. The first two versions are the same, so confirming that the chaos of

⁴⁹ Based on and relying very heavily on an account of the 'Mother Sequence' in *All Work and No Plays* (Ontroerend Goed 2014 174-177).

the first to be “a carefully choreographed piece of theatre” (Goed 2014: 184), suggesting that the:

prejudice against teenagers as chaotic and irresponsible creatures is countered by the discipline they show in meticulously copying the first act.

Whilst the first version seems at first to provide an insight into the more primitive, visceral and violent energies of the teenager, its exact repetition reveals the opposite: the anarchy and disorder that it depicts are entirely fabricated and pre-planned acts.

What at first glance appears as a spontaneous presentation of limitless teenage energy is revealed instead as intricate choreography that serves as a reminder that the teenager is never ever unselfconscious and often painfully aware of the construction and appearance of their own self. What I had at first taken to be a depiction of authentic behaviours of young people is rapidly revealed to be nothing less than manufactured trickery that can and is repeated many times throughout the work. Each of these teenagers are ready and willing to assume the structures of constructed artifice. Their repeated actions say something perhaps about the apparatus of the spectacle - their chaotic and often abusive behaviours always revealed to be mere representation. This representation of youth is entirely fictional, a re-substitution of actual concepts of adolescence with ‘off the shelf’ identities that the adult might expect them to assume.

Next, there is a ‘Ballet Version’ of the original sequence to *Flower Song* by Delibes Lakme in which they are all deadly serious and the cliché of the girls having had some ballet training and the boys having had none is actively encouraged and embraced. There is then a version to *Revolutions* by Donkey Rollers which becomes a collective party moment in which they all dance wildly and perform the choreography jumpstyle. This version pounds with energy, recreating the primal spirit of the teenager with great passion and lucidity. The klaxon sounds and again they all meticulously

clean up the space. In a sharp transition in mood that plunges from ecstatic abandon to intense reflection (reflecting perhaps some of the hormonal side-effects of adolescence), they all exit apart from one who directly addresses spectators / *I'm afraid. I'm afraid that I will do the same like everybody before me that I will become like my parent. I want to do things differently but somehow; I find that I can't. It's like I'm afraid that I'll be forced to do the same* / This reads like a desperate plea to not have to follow the same templates of subjectivity as his parents and everybody before him, and it gives the spectator a way in:

to look at the play as a prison, from which the actors try
to break free by performing different variations on this
same set of actions.

(Ontroerend Goed 2014: 184)

The premise of the work lies in its repetition, suggesting perhaps the endless duplication of lives and behaviours as 'normal' and 'acceptable,' whilst the shifting experimental frames that are brought to the choreography imply that these young people are at least attempting to assert some control over their perceived destinies, however distorted that might appear.

There is then a "Words/Actions Version" of the original sequence as the children/teenagers translate the original choreography into descriptions of the actions as they stand facing the spectators. There is a "Love Version" to *Heartbeats* by Jose Gonzalez in which everybody re-performs the sequence seductively. It stops abruptly and the older boys make protest, asking to do it again, to shouts of "Perverts!" from the girls. There is then a "Boys Only Version" in which all the usual awkwardness of physical interaction between teenage boys becomes apparent - particularly when they re-enact actions from the original sequence that had previously required specifically male/female interaction. There is an air of embarrassed homophobia as they each

physically escape this sequence, leaving only one performer muttering incomprehensible swear words. There is a stark “Empty Stage Version” to Peggy Lee’s *Is That All There Is?* in which the performers do not even appear but instead throw the props from the original sequence into the space in chronological order. There is a sense of these young people not only being required to embody all the impulsiveness of adolescence, but to also provide rational critical comment on it at the same time. The klaxon sounds again. They all meticulously clean up the stage and exit. Silence.

A girl enters on her own and recreates the original sequence from her own unique perspective, commenting on the absent others and interpreting their actions. There is a “Drug Version” to *Cyclops Revolution* by Monster Magnet in which they all perform, regardless of age or experience, as if they have taken drugs. The sequence is partial, elongated and extremely dark. It becomes a live test of what everyone knows/doesn’t know about both the paraphernalia of drugs and their effects. There is an overriding feeling of the youngest children simply copying the older ones. There is then a “Down Version” to *Videotape* by Radiohead which provides the morning after to the scene before. It is lethargic and unenthusiastic and ultimately comes to a stand still. A lone performer comes to the front and tries to get the audience to scream “back off” / *I’m gonna count to three and then you’re all gonna shout ‘Back off.’ Okay, get ready, no holding back no waiting for the person next to you. At three, you will shout ‘Back off’ one, two, three. No seriously, this is really not enough, think about it. When was the last time you shouted in public? Go for it! Shout until you’re hoarse* / I am taunted to make a move, to let go of the strict behavioural parameters that delimit my day to day life. I find myself celebrating the edginess of youth here, recognising the repression of my own desire as an adult that results in demonising and criticising their on-stage behaviours.

There is then a “School Play Version” in which they ridiculously overact and include “all the things they remember from playing old fashioned theatre” (200). They pretend to be a ridiculously happy family always saying an overenthusiastic ‘hello’ to anyone who enters the stage space. What had seemed like a captured reality in the opening sequence has developed into a depiction of entirely ridiculous counterfeit behaviours. This becomes more aggressive and results in everyone fighting to *Nympho* by Armand Van Helden - chairs are trashed and end up scattered all around the space. A girl who trashed her chair stares directly at the spectators, identifying them as the responsible adults in the relation / *Let me be please let me be. But I will be home late whatever hour you give me. I will pass that limit and I will be piss drunk and I will not be ashamed of myself. I have no choice see? /*

It is at this point that I feel most obviously positioned as parent/guardian and my subsequent sense of responsibility is thoroughly tested. Whilst I might have previously recognised the delimitating nature of my own behaviours as adult, it is at this point that I recall the disempowerment of adolescence and consider the necessity of finding other means of testing boundaries and taking risks. There is finally an “Exaggerated Version” to *First Breath After Coma* by Explosions in the Sky. The scene directly mirrors the original sequence but the props have now become enormous versions of the originals and the actions are “multiplied, inflated, magnified and tenfold” (206). Fade to black. Applause and they bow. They meticulously clean up the stage to *Remember Me as a Time of Day* by Explosions in the Sky. I note afterward in the programme the rather foreboding caveat: “Not suitable for children.”



Figure 9: *Once and For All We're Gonna Tell You Who We Are So Shut up and Listen.* (Source: Ontroerend Goed)



Figure 10: *Once and For All We're Gonna Tell You Who We Are So Shut up and Listen.* (Source: Ontroerend Goed)



Figure 11: *Once and For All We're Gonna Tell You Who We Are So Shut up and Listen.* (Source: Ontroerend Goed)



Figure 12: *Once and For All We're Gonna Tell You Who We Are So Shut up and Listen.* (Source: Ontroerend Goed)

Title: *That Night Follows Day* commissioned by CAMPO (Tim Etchells)
Location: The Barbican, London (presented as part of SPILL).
Who: Sixteen performers aged 8 to 14
When: 8th April 2009 ⁵⁰

That Night Follows Day was created with and for sixteen young performers aged between eight and fourteen. Each performer endeavours to articulate the economies of parenting, education, discipline and care, particularly in terms of the methods that adults employ to project perceived truths onto children and how adults and children alike are both constrained and constituted by language.⁵¹ These young people offer themselves up on-stage with all of the formality of a recital; a strategy that frames the reciprocal relationship between child performer and adult spectator and establishes an infrastructure for a dynamic live metaphor of the power play at work in the subjection of the child.

The children are quiet and contemplative as they process onto the Barbican's main stage, promptly clearing the green plastic stackable chairs that are recognisable from every educational institution and are strewn around the floor of the space; a space where, in the absence of adults there seems to have been anarchy, where my own adult gaze⁵² now commands order and discipline. With its court lines and gymnastic apparatus, the set is reconstructed in minuscule detail to duplicate the school gym and,

⁵⁰ At this point the production had been touring for two years, performed in Dutch with subtitles. On 5th November 2011, as part of the 40th celebration season at Sheffield's Crucible, Forced Entertainment presented a public rehearsed reading performed by 8-14-year-old local young people. This was the first time that the text was (officially) performed in its original English. Whilst the analysis refers largely to the original Victoria production, mention is also made in the text of the latter workshop production.

⁵¹ Etchells, T, 2007. *That Night Follows Day*. [Webpage] *Tim Etchells*. Available From: <http://timetchells.com/projects/that-night-follows-day/> [03/01/12]

⁵² It is worth considering in this response that because of my own background as pedagogue, I may in fact be closer to these ideological spaces than some other spectators.

accordingly, I detect loaded references to the regulation and training of the docile body “to be subjected, used, transformed, and improved” (Foucault 1978: 136). As the children come to stand in a single line at the front of the stage, gazing out into the auditorium, I sense their enforced obedience under the scrutiny of my adult gaze. Yet, when they do nothing except simply look back, they make the familiar promptly seem unfamiliar, and any preconceived frames of adulthood and childhood become exposed for all of their fragility. In my encounter with this theatrical moment, I experience a recurring shift through meaning that undermines my own preconceptions and expectations of the child, childhood and the theatrical event, where I detect the tangible embodiment and deliberate failure of:

those other frames and circuits of need, desire, power and
expectation that come into play when adults watch
children and when children perform for adults.
(Etchells 2007: 8)

Correspondingly, the quotidian and reciprocal desiring machine of theatre: between stage and auditorium, between performer and spectator, between the entertainer and entertained, is rocketed into frenzied operation through this overlay of the adult (spectator) /child (performer) frame. A productive force of desire is palpably felt in that auditorium as part of a larger circuit of other machines to which it is connected. As these children continue to do nothing except gaze out, they successfully impede any reciprocal need, desire or expectation and debilitate all the live circuits in operation through blocking the desiring machine’s flow. Their direct gaze might be interpreted as a quotidian gesture of PDT signifying “here we are” and “there you are.” When performed by children, this post-dramatic gesture becomes particularly emphasised because of the way in which it obliterates expectation. It signifies a move away from entrances and exits, character and fiction. It is like the curtain call in reverse, and

requires an altered temporality that enforces interconnection in the present moment.⁵³

After some considerable time, the children start to speak to us in unison / *You feed us / You dress us / You choose clothes for us / You wash us / You bathe us / You clean our teeth / You sing to us / You watch while we are sleeping* / so establishing the protective gestures and structures of control to which they are subject; of children having no agency whatsoever in their total dependency on the governing adult for all their basic physiological, safety, love and belonging needs. As the performance progresses, the subsequent hour-long list of relentless speech acts spoken by these children sets out to expose the subjecting power of language. It reveals how little control children have over the symbolic order of meanings and identities from which their own selfhood derives. The notion that language is itself a fragile and unstable system is fortified / *That words are only words* / which, whilst generously offering us identities to assume, through its inconsistencies and contradictions simultaneously strips us of those identities leaving us all entangled within a shared symbolic order. The language we think we control, in reality controls us.

Etchells' incessant list of speech acts provides a theatrical articulation of the truth claims by which children are subjected; becoming adult is shown here to be dependent upon both a competent entry into language and the successful adoption of societal dictates. As Foucault states: "we are already, before the very least of our

⁵³ In the one-off rehearsed reading of the text at Sheffield's Crucible Theatre in 2011, also directed by Etchells, the majority of spectators were clearly close relations of the performers and the desiring machine embedded within the spectator/performer relation was evidently even more vigorous as the children entered the theatre space for the first time - only to be utterly ruptured by disappointment. In condensed form, when parents watch their children perform, this desiring machine is set into overdrive, yearning for the child to perform to the best of their ability, to outshine other children whilst simultaneously blind to their failures. Reciprocally, the child desires to perform to the best of their ability, to be the pinnacle of their parents' hopes and dreams and to receive validation for their efforts, a need to be adored and applauded. In both productions, I found this stark enhancement and early interruption to the viewing contract unsettling, for the accentuation of my own desire and expectation within that contract immediately brought into sharp focus my own complicity as adult in exercising immense power over the category of childhood.

words, governed and paralysed by language” (2002: 325). Etchells’ text provides an index of the inaccuracies and contradictions that are persistently presented as absolutes to children, within which there is clearly embedded a societal agenda for gaining the ‘right’ attitude for the division of labour which consequently reinforces the rule of the order established by class domination (Althusser 1971: 132) / *That boys are stronger than girls / That poor people are dirty / That white people are full of shit / That black people are stupid / That foreigners stink* / and there is clearly anticipation, within the text, that these young people have potentiality to manipulate this ruling ideology as agents of exploitation and repression themselves / *You say that all our dreams can come true, that the world is there for us / that the sky is the limit / that we can be anything, go anywhere /*

In realising this theatrical articulation of the truth claims that children are expected to abide by, Etchells speaks of having gradually immersed these young performers within a critical structure whereby they could dissociate themselves from the category of childhood as constructed by adults, a task which didn’t come particularly naturally:

I mean they weren’t always so good in naming endless details or in digging really deep. Sometimes they would get somewhere with this and be really insightful, other times they stayed pretty much on the surface (adults gave them presents, adults told them what to do).

(Etchells Personal Correspondence: 2012)

This generation and crossing of preconceived/inherited thresholds can be linked to the discourse of critical pedagogy and certainly has some resonance with the work of the performance artist, who works within zones of contention: “moving between the private and the public, taking from the public to examine the private, taking from the private to examine the public” (Becker 1995: 58). By repositioning this contentious zone as a

desirable mode of being, conditions are facilitated that might encourage resistance to on-going cultural domination. Etchells' motive seems to have been to generate thresholds by making discernible the category of childhood and then transcending its parameters by supporting these young people to develop an awareness of its very limitations; to mobilise them within a process to distance them: "from immersion in the life-world [...] to reflect back critically on the network of visible and invisible forces that pattern that world" (Kester 2004: 93).

The making process behind *That Night Follows Day* seems to have entailed an initial mobilisation of its young ensemble in identifying and distancing themselves from the governing structures of societal operation / *You trick us / You trap us / You take advantage of our trust* / When these children confidently articulate the index of subjection they may seem, albeit fleetingly, to have been responsible for its very compilation and so appear to have all the experiential objectivity of the adult. Valorisation of speech over written word, as a direct conduit to being, momentarily diverts attention here from Etchells' own auteurship by concocting a fictional logic that they somehow have authorship over their own words. However, Etchells always remains unquestionably the:

author-creator who, absent and from afar, is armed with a text and keeps watch over, assembles, regulates the time or meaning of the representation, letting this latter represent him as concerns what is called the content of his thoughts, his intentions, his ideas.

(Derrida 2001: 296)

The invitation to make *That Night Follows Day* had made "a deep connection to my artistic work and to my personal life," particularly in terms of the way Etchells' own children had made him: "think afresh about language, about play, about performance, about ethics and education, about society...about everything in fact" (Etchells 2007: 5). Through attempting to assume the optic of his own children, Etchells effectively

ruptures the adult/child binary through the on-stage appearance of young children who, when speaking his text, embody a weird kind of intellectual and corporeal amalgamation of adult and child. Etchells' maintenance of his own dominant presence within this binary, however, ensures that privilege is always still given to conserving the prominence of the adult in the relation. As a result, he can re-examine the rules of adult operation afresh by constantly posing, as only a child can, the seemingly unassuming question 'why?' - so laying bare and putting to unexpected scrutiny the veiled structures within which adult society conducts itself. He subsequently fashions a unique vantage point that allows him to be highly critical of the naturalised behaviours of adults (and the subsequent behaviours of children) and it is from this contrived perspective that truth claims can be instantly agitated and unravelled.⁵⁴

Within this work, I sense the occurrence of a theatrical discrepancy when these young people speak directly to the adult spectator with all the seeming knowingness of astute adults themselves. The effect is that all the authoritative discourse on developmental truths, i.e. systematised ways of speaking, seeing, feeling and acting about children and childhood, are effectively challenged and the on-stage child can no longer be identified as: "the immature and irrational adult whose development towards

⁵⁴ Etchells' own prior work with Forced Entertainment seems often inspired by the optic of the child and mutated ideas of children's performance – particularly in terms of "makeshift narratives, scenery and costumes that you find both in kids' theatre and in their improvised play at home." (2007: 6). Etchells' first response to Pauwell's invitation had been "a school-assembly costume-pageant" presenting "the entire history of the world." In this concept, there was clearly the potential for mischievously toying with representation alongside the reinvention and subjugation of the grand narratives. The idea was to develop as a separate project for Forced Entertainment, resulting in *The World in Pictures* (2006) – a mock-epic theatrical picture book attempting, in a purposefully shambolic manner, to tell the entire history of mankind. When performed by adults, the opportunities for exploiting the dialectic between the adult and child perspective could be perhaps more fully felt.

adulthood [...] follows predictable, pre-given pathways” (Noughton 2007: 24).⁵⁵ These seem to be children who are “autonomous, knowing, responsible and aware of their culture” (Gordon 2000: 199).⁵⁶

On the enduring obsession with the authentic voice of young people, Etchells says:

I wouldn't set out to make something so naive. I wouldn't claim to represent in that way. In any case, I hardly believe in authentic voices full stop. Voices are voices – they are complicated layerings of desire, fantasy, limit, projection, haunting, fiction. Authenticity is a particularly contemporary tyranny of sorts, and has become a fetish, sought everywhere [...]. In that sense, it doesn't interest me - I'm interested in making something more complex in fact, and which knows very well that it is artifice. But maybe that's another discussion.⁵⁷

In fact, the key to the construction of *That Night Follows Day* lies in its use of artificial presentational tactics that continually counter the possibility of agency / *You give us words to memorise / You arrange us / You make us stand in lines / You tell us that an actor is only a parrot speaking words that he cannot understand / Whilst these children are generally submissive to the wider structures of both the choreography and spoken*

⁵⁵ An exceptional example of the child speaking with the aptitude of the adult is to be found in Tino Sehgal's *Ann Lee*, which was exhibited in *11 Rooms* at Manchester Art Gallery in the Summer of 2011. Here, a series of young girls aged between eight and thirteen, introduce themselves as Ann Lee, a Manga cartoon character that has gone from an image in an art catalogue, to an animation, to the 'live' girl presented. Somehow the result is unsettling as these young girls directly question visitors about their own temporality, reality and fictionality. In his earlier *This Progress* (2010), staged at the Guggenheim, children welcomed museum goers by asking them to take time to reflect on the philosophical nature of progress.

⁵⁶ In the initial critical reception to the work there were indeed accusations of fraudulence in relation to the authentic voice of these young people – an argument perhaps fueled further by its stylistic similarities to some of the key works of Forced Entertainment, notions of the young performers being employed as mere ventriloquist dummies and an unexpected focus upon a nostalgic sense of the adult spectator's own childhood: “a nostalgia of performance to a nostalgia of childhood” (Berridge: 2009). Yet only children and teenagers could have ever performed this work, and only an adult could have ever conceived it; this was always work made by an adult practitioner for adult spectators using child performers.

⁵⁷ Etchells, T, 2008. Natural is Not in it. [Webpage] *Tim Etchells*, 31st October. Available From: <http://timetchells.com/natural-is-not-in-it/> [14/04/12]

text, the relationship between the child performer and adult director/writer/theatre event becomes a crucial metaphor encapsulating the authority of the adult over the child as a social category. When the children speak chorally, there is a sense of the theatre machine acting as a metaphor for the ideological constraints placed upon young people by society, within which the voice of the unified, individual subject is no longer the emphasis and is replaced instead by a distribution of voices that can be read as 'Everychild.' Their words are heard in both contexts of plurality and individuality; emerging from their 'sameness' there is simultaneously a keen focus upon their difference, which is intensified by their own embodied variations in individual habitus. For, as they perform in unison, the distinguishing ways in which they speak, hold themselves, gaze at the spectator or articulate and interpret Etchells' text, results in the emergence of their own marked and peculiar idiosyncrasies.

These young people persistently struggle on-stage with the formality of the presentational strategies within which they are required to operate by discovering the cracks within them and exploring them. Docile bodies often become disobedient bodies as they lose attention, get distracted, get bored or simply look unruly at the edges - so providing unexpected and often unconscious motor challenges to their expected on-stage behaviours.⁵⁸ Whilst the enforced formality of the presentation of this work clearly evokes the school class photograph, or the choir recital, and stands as a metaphor for the frames within which adults control children, these young people simultaneously resist and subvert those very structures as they discern the gaps within them and make space for themselves as individuals, demarcating what might be

⁵⁸ Noland (2009) argues that embodiment of the habitus generates a far greater number of variations than simple iteration can explain, having the potential to accumulate into forms of innovation and resistance that produce profound effects on behaviour (4).

tentatively regarded as their own authentic space that defies the theatrical frame. In *That Night Follows Day* there is a (at times constructed) naturalness to the young people's subversion of the enforced physical and verbal choreography. Like all children, this young ensemble largely obeys the rules of operation. However, they also frequently do as they wish, even if this goes against what they have been taught; children will always defy and resist imposed structure as a natural part of the agentful experimentation that is required to grow up.



Figure 13: *That Night Follows Day*. (Source: Phile Deprez)



Figure 14: *That Night Follows Day*. (Source: Phile Deprez)



Figure 15: *That Night Follows Day*. (Source: Phile Deprez)



Figure 16: *That Night Follows Day*. (Source: Phile Deprez)

Title: *Teenage Riot* ⁵⁹ by Ontroerend Goed (Alexander Devriendt and Joeri Smet).
Location: Traverse, Edinburgh
Who: Eight teenagers aged 13 to 17
When: 18th August 2010

Ontroerend Goed followed *Once and For All We're Going to Tell You Who We Are So Shut Up and Listen* with *Teenage Riot* which was devised using eight of the original cast. *Teenage Riot* sets out to again deliberately provoke the adult spectator through a depiction of youthful rebellion and often ferocious commitment to resistance, particularly in the way in which it explores: “the right to riot without proposing solutions or even proposing a reasonable cause” (Goed 2014: 222). It captures the “bewildering range of options that life seems to offer when you’re fourteen” offering “aimless anger” and “mindless provocation.” Frieze (2013) argues that this specific framing taps into: “a deep-seated and abiding cultural image of teenagers as quasi-feral, needing to be kept tame for fear that society will lose a generation to depravity” (325). In many ways, on a surface level the work captures what Hall identifies as exploration of the darker ramifications of subjectivity post-Freud that led to the emergence of a counter-culture against the dominant and valorised ideals of authenticity; where the concept of authenticity instead manifests itself in more primitive, visceral and violent energies (1996: 608). This “heart of darkness” (Guignon 2004: 105) manifests itself in an emergence of the concept of authenticity as a process allowing the individual to get back in touch with its dark, primitive cravings; a process glorifying anarchy, disorder and violence. As the sequel to *Once and For All...*, *Teenage Riot* deliberately exploits

⁵⁹ This account of live performance is supplemented by viewing of a video recording of the work, held by the Centre for Performance Research.

aspects of adolescence that had not been captured in the former work ⁶⁰ confirming the teenager as the confrontational other within the adult/child binary.

When I enter the Traverse's theatre space, the performance has already commenced. Endless inanimate objects are presented on a live video feed, introducing themselves in comic, growly voices / *Hello I am UHU glue* / *Hello I am Tabasco* / *Hello I am a hideous magnet* / *Hello I am a Post It* / *Hello I am a tomato* / *Hello I am a knife* / *Hello I am a paedophile* / *Hello I am a slutty cigarette* / and so on and so on. Each inanimate object appears to have a strong sense of self. However, it is endless and its banality somewhat infuriating, but instigates at least a little laughter and some half-hearted attempts at reciprocal greeting between performers (via the inanimate objects) and arriving spectators. ⁶¹ A pounding dance track plays. The teenagers enter what becomes to be known as the 'Shed,' an enclosed box within which most of the action occurs and from within which they communicate with spectators via a video camera. There is an implication, perhaps, that concealing the teenagers offers a means of getting out of them what they might not do or say in full view - a potential route perhaps to attaining a more unabashed authenticity. The Shed clearly offers a secure place from which they can openly criticise society without the pressure to offer anything that might look like a sensible alternative, a place from which they can "phrase their thoughts and

⁶⁰ Devriendt says: "I wanted to make something that was closer to the teenagedom I experienced. It was more personal. And I chose actors who had a rebelliousness in them" (Fisher, M, 2010. *Ontroerend Goed bring Teenage Riot to the Edinburgh Fringe*. [Webpage] *The List*, 15th July. Available From: <https://edinburghfestival.list.co.uk/article/27114-ontroerend-goed-bring-teenage-riot-to-the-edinburgh-fringe/>) [30/09/15]

⁶¹ In *All Work and No Plays*, there is a brief account of the research undertaken by the performers on YouTube, watching clips posted by young people that "push the boundaries and provoke extreme reactions." Within this, there was a requirement to reflect on whether the images were real, or whether they were manufactured for a maximum shock effect. This then led into the performers producing their own videos, for which they would never have to apologise or explain their motives. These resulted in a series of sex instruction clips, the cutting up of worms and centipedes into tiny pieces, a video manual for enforcing anorexia and an endless string of everyday objects that are forced to introduce themselves "to the point of exasperation. This series became the opening scene" (2014: 225).

feelings as bluntly and provocatively as possible” (Goed: 231), where they do not even need to look me directly in the eye to air their grievances about the adult world.⁶² From the depths of their Panopticon, these teenagers are both observer and prisoner, willingly contained without the need for locks to secure their imprisonment.

A live video streams images of the interior onto the Shed’s exterior walls, capturing hundreds of graffitied WANKs. There are rapidly inter-spliced shots of someone struggling for breath, teenagers groping each other, cutting themselves, screaming and shouting. The images quickly cut from one to another creating the disorientating effect of strobe lighting. The camera continues to scan the Shed’s interior walls, the scrawled WANKs now replaced by scrawled FUCKs, the camera focusing in now on a hand and marker pen that painstakingly writes ‘fuckfuckfuckfuckfuck.’ There is then juxtaposed a scene of completely haphazard puppet theatre in which a cardboard cut-out of a girl appears, taking a walk through a forest. She spots a piece of cheese pulled on a thread and pursues it. A cut out of a middle-aged man wearing a nappy appears. He rapes her and a dog discovers her blood-stained dress and howls. The short sequence apparently emerged from one of the performer’s interactions with a Facebook game called Mousehunt in which it is a requirement to buy (expensive) Superbrie to catch mice. Performers had interacted online with an older man who paid for their Superbrie in return for their attention. The paedophile of this micro narrative is their own representation of this older man (Goed 2014: 238) and extends, in the

⁶² Developing the performers criticism and resistance was clearly an integral part of the pedagogical process behind this work, a need to “gauge their criticism and their comments on society. Ask them questions” (Goed 2014: 229). This resulted in explorations led by the following questions: What’s wrong with the world? What do you disagree with? What are you confronted with personally? Is life a lot harsher for your generation compared to the generation before you? Do you have more responsibilities, or less? Where’s your riot or rebellion? What makes you angry? What do you criticize? How do adults criticize young people? What’s your criticism of adults, in particular of your parents? How do you express your criticism? How does an ideal world look to you? How do you see your future? Who do you want to be in 20 years? Who will you be?

circumstances, to also represent the adult spectators who are positioned as opportunist voyeurs looking in – it has been made clear exactly how they perceive me from the outset. There is then a close-up of cartoonish drawings, a sequence of hand drawn war scenes, deaths and demonstrations, wars and slaughtered animals accompanied with live sound effects: “It’s like a little kid re-enacting the news to come to terms with it” (238).

Surf Solar by The Fuck Buttons plays - even the name of the music artist is provocative. The camera image is blurry and there is shouting and screaming. The live video captures someone being physically, emotionally and mentally abused by the others. There are shouts from various performers / *I don’t wanna go home / I want you to see us / We’re not gonna explain anything / We’re gonna have a shitload of fun / Everything should be possible in here* / The music builds and I am witness to more scenes of abuse between the teenagers. The camera pans out to reveal two teenage girls who stare directly at camera. They lift their tops to reveal their bras, lick their fingers and appear aware of how they construct and project an image of themselves as intensely sexual objects.

There is a close-up of a warning on a carrier bag: “To avoid the danger of suffocation keep away from children” and then a mid shot reveals a young person struggling for breath within the same carrier bag. A teenage boy is forced to have sex with a teenage girl. It is brutal and repellent. It is then interrupted as first the boy, and then the girl, turn to the camera and laugh. I have been seduced by the mechanisms of representation at work here and have momentarily made a moral judgement on what I had perceived to be happening at face value. Their glance to camera, laughing, makes emphasis of their critical perspective on the operation of representation here, confirming their seeming control over the construction and dismantling of the

representation of themselves within the post-dramatic frame. These young people portray themselves as having complete control over my reading of their bodies - as all that they construct for the camera is simultaneously undermined for its constructedness. I am ridiculed for what I see, believe and make moral judgement on in the constructions that they take the time to transmit.

I sense these teenagers having both the know-how and resources to present highly selective images of themselves to the outside world from within their Shed, which is precisely the stuff of the self-construction of their own mediated identities within the social media networks that each likely participate in on a day-to-day basis. There is perhaps also a case to be made here that the version of adolescence that I am witness to is already highly mediated by Devriendt and Smet and that the placement of the teenagers within the Shed, who are then transmitted via video camera, makes this representation even more constructed, constricted and claustrophobic. All that I see of the interior of the Shed and its inhabitants is only ever presented in mediated form, projected onto the front of the box. Additionally, there is an inconspicuous merging together of live action and pre-recorded events, which further ensures the manipulation and control of the images that I receive and tend to want to interpret as truth.

There is a close-up of a face / *I'm not gonna show you, I'm not gonna show you. Cause I don't have to do shit. I don't have to do shit!* / Through meticulous manipulation of the video camera, they appear as if naked, participating in an orgy, kissing and licking bare body parts. Someone licks the camera lens and spittle runs down the projected image. It is licked away. Whereas Victoria's *Bernadetje* had interpellated the spectator instigation of a "disturbingly paedophilic gaze" (Kear 2006: 110), something else occurs here in that the spectator is additionally parodied and ridiculed for their own consumption of the image that is simultaneously constructed and

deconstructed before them. This incessant shift between fictional construction and what might at least seem like reality ensures that the spectator shifts from responding to the provocative acts of these teenagers in a moral sense, to reflecting on what is being received as an aesthetic construction.

They taunt the spectator further with their behaviours by pretending to have learning difficulties. There is video of them in a park in which they approximate and mock the movements associated with cerebral palsy.⁶³ One of the girls shouts / *Who wants to lose their virginity in the Shed?* / They all raise their hands. There is a close-up of hands and a knife that cuts fingers. Blood is shared – friends forever. One shouts / *who wants everything to be possible here?* / There is raucous agreement. There is boisterous singing as the camera shifts to a boy in a yellow sweatshirt who is blindfolded with his hands secured above him, part rock star part crucifixion. Hands grab at him and pull at his trousers. He is worshipped in an utterly terrifying way, groped by the hoarding crowd of young people surrounding him. The shot moves to the faces of those around him, screaming and wailing. He slips away and climbs onto the top of the Shed, eventually standing on the roof with arms outstretched. His face appears on screen / *I get (almost) anything I want* / The hysteria in the Shed increases substantially.

A young male face appears on the projection / *Welcome to my playboy mansion*⁶⁴ / The wannabe pimp's feet are revealed and someone is licking them. Girls' hands massage his torso and he is eventually enveloped by all the female members of the

⁶³ An additional series of videos were recorded in public places and included pranks on members of the public and acting out being young people with learning difficulties: "They got so carried away that some of them jumped into the pond, others scared bystanders and chased them through the park" (Goed 2014: 226).

⁶⁴ This section of work emerged from an invitation to stage their secret dreams in front of a camera, the results of which included being a pimp, a worshipped rock star and a secret trapdoor that would allow escape from the space.

company. A girl appears with two cream pies and she slams them into his face. A girl dances provocatively. Her face is projected onto the Shed and she tells us the story of a relationship she was once in, confessing to having been pregnant and having an abortion (each performer had been asked to make three private confessions to the camera, only one of which had to be true). There is a close-up of a blonde girl's face who says directly to us / *You make such a big deal of everything. It's as if I'm in a cage and I look at you. Or actually, the other way around. You are in a cage. And I don't understand that you don't want to get out* / As in other works discussed here, I have no option but to feel like the oppressive adult in the relationship. The words 'cage' and 'caged' emerge many times here - on one hand, I am viewed as being incarcerated because of the stagnancy of my own desire, but there is additionally ongoing indication that the teenagers in front of me are in a cage of their own construction from which they cannot leave.

A multitude of voices are heard whining, presumably parodying the adults in their lives. This is accompanied with found images of disturbing and violent looking adults / *Nobody reads my poems / Why do I want to buy so much stuff? / Why does the government never listen to us? / My pension is at risk / I'm starting to get love handles / Immigrants are taking all our jobs* / etc. There is a close-up of a girl putting on emo-style black make-up. Live earthworms on a table are cut up into tiny pieces with kitchen knives, massacred as the girls shriek with laughter and disgust. A girl in close-up announces / *I'm an attention seeking fat frump who can't take alcohol or criticism* / Another / *I'm a pale-skinned bitch, a slut. Who gets off with guys for my image* / Another / *Apparently good looking. But if you look properly, there's nothing beautiful about me* / The shot changes to exterior. There is heavy snow. A girl is sat on the ground and others repeatedly throw snowballs at her. Two girls appear on the roof of

the Shed, smoking and drinking a can of beer. They offer detailed tips to stay thin and be anorexic: vomiting, smoking, eating chewing gum, looking at your own fat in the mirror to invoke self-disgust, hurting oneself to come to associate food with pain and using pills, disguising hair and nail loss with a hat and nail polish.

There is a close-up of a boy who proceeds to advise on how to / *finger a girl properly* / in intricate detail, employing the crucial ingredients / *a slutty girl* / and / *a clean finger* / He pulls up his t- shirt and appears to masturbate throughout. He imitates orgasm. He offers techniques like / *the worm* / *the tornado* / and, for more advanced practitioners / *the twizzler* / (Goed: 262). He is interrupted, mid-sentence, by a direct question about his acne and there is a sharp change of mood and emotion as he makes a quick shift to becoming victim. The projection of a boy's face replaces the snowball fight. A rant is heard that employs phrases that might be spoken by a parent, educator, teacher, family member or adults in general (264). Increasingly, hands squeeze and manipulate his face, eventually violently / *It's a phase, she'll grow out of it* / *Are you unhappy, maybe?* / *Are you still studying Latin?* / *Don't you love us, is that it?* / *If I was your age, you could have me...you definitely could have me* / *Sorry, I'm a bit plastered, sorry, it won't happen again* / *dad is going to live on his own for a while, but it won't change anything* / *didn't you have a key?* / *It's our little secret* / As the music swells, his face is slapped repetitively. The young people take out pictures of their parents, holding them next to their own faces. They put plastic bags over their heads and exit the Shed and all stand in the space facing the spectators.

Now outside the Shed, they set light to the photographs in their hands, dropping the ashen remains onto the floor. The plastic bags are removed from their heads. The video camera is now turned on to the spectators and our own images are relayed onto the front of the Shed. The young people begin throwing tomatoes at the screen. There is

screaming and shouting, particularly when older or miserable looking spectators are targeted in close-up. A struggle breaks out between the performers, in which the carrier bags are used to once again attempt suffocation of one another. On the surface of the Shed, there is projection of an extremely violent video game in which a perpetrator attempts the brutal suffocation of his victim. Limbs are cut off and blood splashes everywhere. It briefly stops the young people in their tracks. One of them directly addresses the spectators / *Amazing game, isn't it? I like to play it. So, fucking, yeah.... you know. I've got another on the internet where you can torture someone by putting him in a bath of acid or grate his skin off with a cheese grater. Awesome shit. It's hilarious. Apparently, I'm going to get de-sensitized to violence. Hey, I didn't create this game* / (270). A girl on the roof of the Shed speaks / *If you stopped forgetting to pick me up at one o'clock in the morning maybe that would be a start. And if you love me unconditionally whatever I do that would be good* / One girl announces she wants to return to the Shed. One of the boys leaves the stage and takes a seat in the audience. Another girl follows his example. They are withdrawing from their teenage behaviours and perhaps beginning their journey into adulthood.

The girl left alone on stage now directly addresses us / *I do want to be like you. I'm up for it. Earn good money. Preferably a little bit more than most of you. And I'll go to the theatre including plays about teenagers. And I'll watch them being angry and unable to change anything. But...I will continue to care. And if someone meets me when I'm eighty or something....And they say, Did you actually do anything? You see, you're just like the rest of us. You haven't changed anything. Then I'll say, "I am still as angry as a fourteen-year-old"* / Only one boy remains on stage. He stands in front of the Shed, blocking the projection. He catches the projection of the face of one of the girls onto his sweatshirt. He talks to her / *Could you stand still? / Why? / You fit exactly on my t-shirt.*

I'm not gonna stay / I got that / Do you mind? / No, I understand / He gently caresses the face on his sweatshirt and then takes a seat alongside spectators in the front row. He has moved “to the other side” (274).

Meanwhile, one of the girls inside the Shed reveals a door in the floor. She lifts it to reveal a ladder leading down to a basement. Melancholy music plays: *Spanish Sahara* by Foals. They all appear to go down to the basement, except for one teenage girl who stays in the Shed. The camera provides a close-up of her face. They each go their own way. We follow the path of one girl who opens a door into the open air. As she makes her way into the garden, the lyrics of the song resonate / *Leave the horror here / Forget the horror here / Leave it all down here / It's future rust / and its future dust* / There is something about the resonance and combination of song lyric and visual image that makes me think of the Josef Fritzl case, of children locked in the basement of an Austrian house for decades and those that were able to leave and live upstairs. Perhaps the adult spectator is considered here as Fritzl – entirely responsible for the repression, confinement and containment which these teenagers rail against. The same girl grabs the cable of the camera, holds it up and disconnects it. The image briefly distorts and goes to black. There is a standing ovation after which spectators are invited on stage to explore the Shed – “the only moment of the show we truly feel welcome” (278).



Figure 17: *Teenage Riot* (Source: Ontroerend Goed)



Figure 18: *Teenage Riot* (Source: Sarah Walker)



Figure 19: *Teenage Riot* (Source: Ontroerend Goed)



Figure 20: *Teenage Riot* (Source: Ontroerend Goed)

Title: *Haircuts by Children* by Mammalian Driving Reflex
Location: Kaizo Salon, Hoxton, London
Who: Various children aged 8 to 12 from Canning Town and Newham
When: 10th July 2010

Based in Germany and Canada, Mammalian Driving Reflex describe *Haircuts by Children* as: “a whimsical relational performance that playfully engages with the disenfranchisement of children, with trust in the younger generation, and the thrills and chills of vanity.”⁶⁵ This performance work requires the intensive training of children aged between eight and twelve by professional hairstylists over a period of a week. They are given financial remuneration to operate a real hair salon for the general public. The company state that the work invites its adult spectator/participant to view young people as creative and competent individuals whose aesthetic choices can and presumably should be trusted. Allowing an unknown child to cut one’s own hair involves much urgent and largely unspoken negotiation. In my direct experiencing of this work as a spectator/participant, the most difficult area of negotiation was the complexity and awkwardness of enforced intimate proximity with an unknown child, which necessitated urgent reconsideration of all the usual adult/child power/trust relationships. As the adult *in* this work, I found that I never experienced the safety of engaging with other adults since everything was mediated through the child hairdresser: from the initial booking of the appointment, through to the supply of refreshments and the cutting and styling of my hair.

An early telephone conversation with one of the children went something like this:

⁶⁵ O'Donnell, D, *Haircuts by Children*. [Webpage] *Mamallian Driving Reflex*. Available From: <http://mammalian.ca/projects/#haircuts-by-children> [12/06/14]

/ Hello Sir. How are you today? I'm ringing to confirm that you will come for your appointment for Haircuts by Children? / Ah, hi. Yes, that's right. Thanks for reminding me / Are you absolutely sure that you're going to come? / Yes, yes, most definitely. Is 2pm still good? / Yes, that's absolutely fine Sir / Can I just ask, am I able to request a specific hair style? / Yes, you have whatever you want. We're looking forward very much to meeting you and doing your hair. Bye bye / The telephone is put down abruptly.

When my own hair is cut by an at a guess eight-year-old girl who I think was called Asha, I am forced for the duration of about twenty-five minutes to forcibly and temporarily set aside my own vanity. I am pressured to make her believe that I have absolute trust in both her creative ability and own sense of responsibility. I am required in those twenty-five minutes to completely reconsider what children can do and should not do, and how adults generally interact with children. I found this shared intimate moment between myself and a child I had never met before excruciatingly difficult. In that initial telephone call, I had effectively extended an invitation to an unknown child to make critical decisions about my obvious outward appearance and to then act on those decisions as an actual aesthetic realisation. Arrighi & Emeljanow argue that this creation of an affective environment controlled entirely by children generates a strange and awkward intimacy between the stylist and client, where: “both must navigate a spatial and social proximity that our culture conventionally forbids. Both parties engage in unsafe behaviors (talking to children, letting a child near your head with scissors) that require trust” (2014: 148).

This performance work places enforced risk at the crux of the interrelationship between the adult and child, providing a means to reconsider and perhaps even temporarily overcome the parameters that would usually impose a gulf between

children and adults and control over children's bodies and actions. This felt like a high-risk situation in every sense. By sitting in the stylist's chair, I was entering an unspoken contract that I felt obliged to administer - whereby I would allow the child to do whatever they liked to my external appearance.

In that space of approximately twenty-five minutes, I felt that I had to assume acute responsibility for Asha's future well being and sense of self esteem and, in the process of doing so, that I had to submit to whatever choices she subsequently made. Had I at any point remarked upon the quite frankly haphazard aesthetic choices that I was on the receiving end of (complete with blue and silver spray-on streaks and stars), I felt that I would be entirely damaging her need for creative accomplishment and, perhaps more importantly, preventing the sheer joy she was evidently experiencing in this position of agency. Allowing an eight-year old child to proceed in cutting my hair involved a huge amount of courage for me and, in rationalising this moment, I did consider that a bad haircut would not be the end of the world and could be easily rectified through later expert adult attention. The company state on their website:

The idea that kids should be allowed to cut our hair evokes the same leap of faith, courage and understanding required to grant children deeper citizenship rights. For many it is actually less terrifying to contemplate allowing kids to vote.

In this interrelationship between adult client and child hairdresser, there is something about the futurity of the child that comes into sharp focus, the scissors (the company argue) perhaps becoming a means to metaphorically fashion a future where adults respect and trust their choices, where they might have rights and agency in influencing their own futures.

I have an acute sense of the performativity of the child stylist here for she knows exactly what to say and approximates well the behaviours, gestures and language of the

adult / *Good afternoon. My name's Asha and today I'll be your stylist. The London style this season is high on top and short at the sides* / Asha seems to have a strong sense of the required gestures, actions and qualities of the professional. Whilst her actual aesthetic choices tend to reflect the kind of art work a young child might bring home from school (praised and temporarily exhibited by the parent), the challenge for the spectator/participant here is that this artwork takes place upon their body and that they are subsequently required to display the results to all - including away from the initial site of performance. As I scrutinise this child stylist in action, I have become her creative subject as I submit to the cold sharpness of the scissors and razor, and the aesthetic choices that she makes on my behalf. When I do subtly make suggestions as to style, this is entirely mediated by her own interpretation and intention. I am subject to this child through her direct control over me and my complete dependence on her. As I am restyled, this child brings about an exterior change to me. She does all the things that the adult usually does for the child: there has been an acute role reversal.

There is something very particular here in terms of the way in which the relational nature of power is dealt with, of the way in which it is exchanged between the adult and the child, how it is assumed and interchanged through the roles both of us are provided with. Within this extraordinarily intense interrelationship, power relations remain unstable and in constant re-negotiation. On one level, power in this performance is merely an extension of play acting. However, when Asha wields her scissors and clippers, power becomes a very tangible and real thing. The continually shifting power relations at work here feel to me very disordered and unpredictable. Although operating in the basic relation between adult and child, they also intrude into, affect and interrupt notions of the professional and amateur, and the performer and spectator. The salon itself becomes a utopian site where children are given the responsibility to be the

professional in total agreement with the adult. The panoptic adult gaze is largely removed, or at least seems absent, from the in-the present moment of the work – the only adult gaze I am aware of is my own, looking intently at myself in the mirror at the transformation that is taking place and my reactions to it. Asha appears to be oblivious to that gaze and is instead focused intently on her creation which just so happens to be me.



Figure 21: *Haircuts by Children*. (Source: Mamallian Diving Reflex)



Figure 22: *Haircuts by Children*. (Source: John Launer)

Title: *Before Your Very Eyes* by CAMPO/Gob Squad
Location: Unicorn, London
Who: Fourteen children aged 10 to 14
When: 30th June 2012

Before Your Very Eyes was the outcome of collaboration between CAMPO and the UK/German collective Gob Squad.⁶⁶ Along with Josse De Pauw's *üBUNG*, and Tim Etchells' *That Night Follows Day*, it is the third part of the Victoria/CAMPO trilogy of theatre works with children that were made for a specifically adult audience. The company first met with fourteen children aged between seven and twelve in 2009 to undertake a succession of video recordings. By the time the performance premiered in Berlin in April 2011, they were all aged ten to fourteen. Throughout the research and development period, Gob Squad required the children to interview themselves on camera on a regular basis to reflect upon events, both personal and concerning the world that they inhabited. In this work, the spectator is positioned as voyeur to these children who, located in a 'safe-room' made of one-way mirrors, peer into the future at themselves (us) as adults, and nostalgically back at their recent past. The performance incites in the adult spectator an awareness of our preoccupation with the ageing process and the preservation of lost youth; in stark contrast to these young people "who seem keen to leave behind childhood forever."⁶⁷

At the outset of the performance, the children do precisely as children should

⁶⁶ An American version later premiered in October 2015 at the Public Theatre, New York City. It ran for six weeks, ending in November 2015.

⁶⁷ Gob Squad, 2011. *Before Your Very Eyes*. [Webpage] *Gob Squad*. Available From: <http://www.gobsquad.com/projects/before-your-very-eyes> [15/05/2014]

by innocuously playing out the games of childhood. This continues for some time and their oblivion to the presence of the adult spectators seems to reinforce: “the concept of ‘child’s play’ contribut[ing] to the separation of children from adult society where play is a world of its own with little connection to the ‘real’ adult world” (Ailwood 2003: 69). The opening image taps into a romantic and nostalgic view on the discourse of play (they are playing the games of my own childhood) but also draws upon play characteristics discourse in that they are all actively engaged, intrinsically motivated, being creative and appear free from external rules.

However, from somewhere above, a rule-making female adult voice suddenly halts play – part patronising schoolteacher, parent, grandparent, perhaps god or even a female version of Kubrick’s Hal – to which the children obey with little resistance by all obediently looking upwards / *I just wanted to let you know, they’re all here now. Everyone’s sitting down. And they’re all watching you* / There is inaudible and excited children’s chatter as the young performers tentatively approach the one-way mirrored wall dividing performer and spectator; they press their faces against it, their hands shaped like binoculars, endeavouring to glimpse their adult voyeurs who, unlike them, have carte blanche to look all they like.

Reflecting the disciplinary mechanism of the Panopticon, the mise-en-scène here provides a stark image of hierarchy and surveillance: a “state of conscious and permanent visibility that assures the automatic functioning of power” and dissociates the “see/being seen dyad” (Foucault 1978: 201). These young people know that they are being observed and, for the most part, this guarantees order. Whilst the children of *That Night Follows Day* always had the audacity and the freedom to look back, here the mise-en-scène severely obscures the young ensemble’s attempts to make that gaze reciprocal and, consequently, the adult spectator is very rapidly transported to the

secure position of voyeur. The operation of this surveillance machine proves to be a communal effort on the part of the body of spectators with the consequence that “a real subjection is born mechanically from a fictitious relation” (Foucault 1978: 202). And whilst the role of the Panopticon as a laboratory of power, as a machine within which to carry out experiments to alter behaviours and to train and correct individuals is transparent here, what unfolds is the reversal of its very operation – for, as I consider that one-way mirrored box, it becomes increasingly apparent that I am in fact the focus of surveillance and that these children are providing a mirrored reflection of my own behaviours.

This debilitating one-way mirrored box, as a deliberate metaphor of control and containment, appropriates the techniques of discipline proceeding from the distribution of individuals in space. Foucault describes this when he identifies that political investment of the body is bound up with its economic use: “the body becomes a useful force only if it is both a productive body and a subjected body” (1978: 25-26). These techniques of discipline, per Foucault, include the requirement of enclosure, the division of disciplinary space into as many sections as there are bodies, and solitude as a necessity for body and soul to confront temptation and the severity of God alone (141-143). Whilst these young people are not divided into isolated components of that space, I clearly am – for in my seat in the auditorium I am at once one and a whole, and in my resulting solitude I contemplate not God, but more secular intentions as conditions are established to reflect upon my life that has already gone and the life that is hopefully still to come.

Within their seemingly impenetrable box⁶⁸ these children are like the insects collected "in a jam jar,"⁶⁹ an(other) species, the focus of an ethnographic study with myself positioned as the studious ethnographer. However, as they begin to enact their anticipated futures and I gaze into that one-way mirrored box, the familiar construct of looking at the Other in seeking to see oneself (Phelan 1993: 16) is introduced as I see an image of myself from outside of myself; and consequently, as the performance progresses, my position rapidly shifts from ethnographer to auto-ethnographer. Onto these on-stage children I begin to project the desire for the return of my own lost youth and a nostalgia for a probably reinvented childhood. I scrutinise them under my own metaphorical magnifying glass as Everychild and Everyteenager and use them as a benchmark to critically reflect on what I have not become.

From the chaos and confusion of the multiple selves that I probably embody, the clarity and innocence of the child in front of me enacting the life I've already lived and the death I will certainly die, serves only to remind me of the earlier anticipated self I have not become. The fragmentation and dissociation that I encounter in my everyday life is momentarily put on hold, as my own life span is sharply brought into focus (*Before My Very Eyes*) as an image of continuity and wholeness - from which I derive a new understanding of self from Otherness. Through witnessing my own lifespan go before me in fast forward, I very momentarily see myself as unified and whole with the result that by the end of the performance I find myself alien to myself and am left radically de-centred, armed with a fleeting critical distance to my own life world. The

⁶⁸ I am reminded of Societas Raffaello Sanzio's *Inferno* (2009) in which children play with colourful balloons within a one-way mirrored glass box, unaware of a threatening external world outside – Castellucci's own take on limbo perhaps.

⁶⁹ Gob Squad, 2011. *Before Your Very Eyes*. [Webpage] *Gob Squad*. Available From: <http://www.gobsquad.com/projects/before-your-very-eyes> [15/05/2014]

effect, although initially disconcerting, is rather uplifting.

Red digital text flies by above the dark performance space / *Ladies and Gentlemen! / Gob Squad Proudly Present / Real live children! / in a rare and magnificent opportunity / to witness seven lives lived in fast forward / Before Your Very Eyes /* Instantaneously the space lights up and a teenager is revealed engrossed in a rendition of a Freddie Mercury impression centre stage, whilst other children and teenagers watch from the edges / *Tonight I'm gonna have myself a real good time / I feel alive and the world it's turning inside out yeah! / I'm floating around in ecstasy / So don't stop me now don't stop me / 'Cause I'm having a good time having a good time /* The music cuts off abruptly, yet the teenage boy continues dancing frantically. The adult female voice from above speaks / *Hey Maurice, you can stop now / Maurice, you can stop /* A teenage girl comes forward and reassuringly puts her hand on Maurice's shoulder and his frenetic dancing is instantly subdued. She leaves him centre stage. There is silence. After a little time, the disembodied female voice continues / *Can we hear his heart now please? /* A young boy comes forward, picks up a microphone and puts it to the boy's chest. A heartbeat is heard / *That's a good beginning / the sound of a small heart beating /* The heartbeat continues / *You do know why you're here don't you? / You're here to live / then die / I don't think everyone's got the time to sit and watch you for decades / So you better get on with it / Go on... / Grow up! /* A young girl, aged about eight or nine, nervously comes centre stage and directly addresses the disembodied female voice. Speaking in her native Flemish, simultaneous translation in the form of subtitles is provided above / *We've been thinking a lot about death recently / No matter how things work out / I will be dying / So will you / We are all speeding towards death yet here we are alive /* The female voice from above rapidly intervenes / *But I don't think that's what everybody wants to hear now / You're still so young / They*

want to see you carefree/

In this interaction between disembodied adult female voice and the on-stage child performers is enacted a disabling and reciprocal power relation which goes something like: you are the child, you do what I say; you are the adult, I will do what you say and believe that what you say is in the best interests of both myself and my future. Perhaps what additionally emerges here is a sense of the director/actor relation as a particularly antiquated one in which a director tells the actors what he (sic) wants, and of the total vulnerability of the actor in the director's hands. The juxtaposition of the category of childhood over this relationship, along with the inevitable traces of pre-existing behaviourist discourse relating to teacher and pupil, results in a multi-faceted power relation inextricably linked to the exhortation *do as you're told!* that completely encapsulates the expectation of the authority of adults over children as a social category: "an exhortation used not solely to control specific behaviour but also to symbolize something more abstract – that is, children, should, as a matter of principle, do what adults tell them" (James & James 2004: 3). Apart from reflecting adult authority in general, *do as you're told!* emphasises the ability and desire of adults to exercise control, not only over children, but also over childhood (3). Such control is, of course, usually charmingly packaged as an explicit means of ensuring welfare and, more implicitly and perhaps more disturbingly, of ensuring conformity.⁷⁰

In their subsequent enactment of the fourth decade, a female figure in a mustard twin set and pearls comes forward. The voice from above announces / *It's your fortieth*

⁷⁰ James & James argue that the exhortation *do as you're told!* is preventative and simultaneously draws our attention to the fact that children will often seek to do as they wish, even if this goes against what they have been told or taught to do (2004: 4).

birthday / You never thought this day would come / You had a haircut / But it's a disaster / To dark undertones of funereal music, the seven children come forward to the mirrored wall. Lit only by fluorescent tubes from below, they are starkly presented in their forties with pillows stuffed up t-shirts, a plate of badly prepared sushi, a multitude of completely useless gadgets and learnt gestures and poses suggesting that it's all depressingly down hill from here. The voice asks / *And what can you do now that you're forty-five?* / One child replies / *I can explain something without getting it myself* / This section focusing upon middle-age I find the most poignant, for these children parody that deep insecurity within each of us that we could have done far better for ourselves, that life is meaningless and all we have to look forward to is death – a nihilistic outlook that is further reinforced when they get to their fifth decade / *what was a mysterious and exciting future is now starting to fade / you realise you're not special / As the world forgets you, as you learn that there is no one watching / and there never was /*

The focus of *Before Your Very Eyes* is very much upon mimicry as these young people re-enact and parody the expected models of life-span development that I, as their spectator, have already enacted, or am likely to enact within the remainder of my life. Here is a direct commentary on the pointless and vacuous nature of my own life that is made even starker by the fact that it is entirely enacted by children. And the fact that children perform my own behaviours effectively alienates me from those behaviours, even when I recognise them as my own. The performance makes visible the structures within which I exist, the way in which they are produced and regulated, their interrelationship with discourse, and acknowledges that such discourse is entirely fabricated as a social construction.

And then the death drive rears its head within their innocuous play / *Yeah. Let's*

do the dying! / I don't care how I die, as we're all going to die in a way we don't want to / They don signifiers of old age - spectacles, grey wigs, slippers, head scarves, badly fitting suits and drawn on wrinkles - and perform a *danse macabre*. Capitalising on the child's preoccupation with acting out death, each of them dies the most dramatic and horrible death. I witness strokes, suffocations, heart attacks, shootings, hangings, car accidents and poison apples, all possibilities for the one thing I do not know. Heiner Müller⁷¹ had argued that the basic element of theatre and of drama was transformation, death being the final transformation and theatre always having to make do with symbolic death (Lehmann 2006: 47). Genet had additionally been concerned with the triumph of death over reality – having hit on the idea that the true site of theatre was the cemetery and that theatre was essentially a mass for the dead.⁷² Both Genet and Müller agree that theatre is a dialogue for the dead: the work of art is not directed to future generations but is essentially offered to the innumerable mass of the dead. Genet had wanted theatre to be ‘la fête’ – a festivity addressed to the dead (Lehmann 2006: 70).

In keeping with these notions, *Before Your Very Eyes* constructs its very own cemetery of death. But here we have a reversal on the dramatic notion of death in tragedy being about dead ancestors - for this post-dramatic gesture of death frames the futurity of both the on-stage children and ourselves. The addition of the children's potentiality to the equation (who have up until this point relentlessly depicted my own impotentiality) ensures that this post-dramatic gesture of death is an optimistic one. For, as I watch my inevitable death enacted by these children on stage, I sense a call to

⁷¹ Müller states: “The essential thing about theatre is transformation. Dying. And the fear of this last transformation in general, one can rely on it, one can depend on it.” Kluge, A., & Müller, H. *Ich bin ein Landvermesser: Gespräche*, New Folge, Hamburg, Rotbuch, 1996: p95. Cited in Lehmann: 2006: 47.

⁷² Genet, J. L. 'Étrange mot d'urbanisme' in *Œuvres complètes*, Vol 4, Paris: Gallimard, 1968: p.9. Cited in Lehmann: 2006: 70.

action - a call to subvert the expected lifespan models of subjectivity that are habitually assumed with inevitability through an authentic being-toward-death (Heidegger 2010: 249). For Heidegger, death makes us true individuals for when one faces death we no longer view the self within a social function; if I conceal my mortality I go along with the They because I perceive that there is plenty of time to be My-Self later. Death potentially strips us of our relations with others: no one can die for me; I do not know in advance how I will die but I can anticipate my death as a necessary event (Zimmerman 1986: 72). Through accepting the necessity of death, what emerges are all the possibilities that are uniquely my own.⁷³ So, by positioning both child performer and adult spectator in that moment of both potentiality and impotentiality, there is established the possibility for a dynamic self-creation that looks towards making choices in the construction of subjectivity “in open defiance of the inherited modes of being that are being laid down for us constantly in every single moment of our day-to-day lives.” But there always remains the potential to “not-to-do, [the] potential not to pass into actuality” (Agamben 1999: 180). And finally, when only one single performer is left alive, standing centre stage amongst the play dead corpses in her housecoat, scarf, slippers and Marigolds, the disembodied voice from above asks / *how does it feel to be the last one left?* / And then she too of course dies.

⁷³ Adorno, however, argues that in having no choice but to obey death it functions to integrate the individual into the social order, only to confirm our position as They (2003:125).



Figure 23: *Before Your Very Eyes*. (Source: Phile Deprez)



Figure 24: *Before Your Very Eyes*. (Source: Phile Deprez)



Figure 25: *Before Your Very Eyes*. (Source: Joan Marcus)



Figure 26: *Before Your Very Eyes*. (Source: Joan Marcus)

Title: *All That is Wrong*⁷⁴ by Ontroerend Goed (Directed by Alexander Devriendt)
Location: Arnolfini, Bristol
Who: Koba⁷⁵ Ryckewaert and Zach Hatch
When: 22nd May 2013

All That is Wrong is the third part of the Ontroerend Goed *Teenage Trilogy*, capturing “a moment in life where you have to start positioning yourself in the world and take up responsibility” (Goed 2014:292). It is an exercise in cultural mapping and self-reflection at the threshold of adulthood, in deciding what to care about and be angry about in the world, where to align oneself and how to think. Logically, it is a re-enactment of the work’s very first rehearsal in which, starting from a chalked ‘I’ in the centre of the floor, the central performer (Koba) explored an exhaustive train of thought that captured everything that she deemed to be wrong in the world (293). The work exists in a kind of fraudulent present/fictional real – on the one hand, seeming like a spontaneous self-reflection on the subject’s own place in the world, in antithesis to which there is always a sense of its complete constructed-ness and prepared-ness.

Frieze (2014: 331) identifies the peculiar temporal territory of this work as a “liminal space between the real and the hypothetical” in which occurs “a liminal temporality between past and present.” The adoption of what he describes as a “quotational, telepresent tense” (332) evokes, he argues, a crisis about present-ness in which there is “slippage *between* tenses that effects jolts in our perception of what is or what is not happening.” This slippage feels rather like a stutter taking place in Koba’s

⁷⁴ This account of an original viewing of the live performance is supplemented by a recording of the performance: Goed, Ontroerend, 2013. *All That is Wrong - Full Play*. [Website] Available from: <https://vimeo.com/61508588> [26/01/16], and a written account of the work in *All Plays and No Work* (Goed: 2014).

⁷⁵ Koba appears in all three parts of Ontroerend Goed's *Teenage Trilogy* as a child, teenager and young adult.

occupation of reality. Siegel (1981) explores the stutter as a stage of the fight all people have, between contempt for the world and respect for it: “Stuttering is a collision [of the desire] to be related” (324) and the desire to be “a snug, perfect point, capable of dismissing anything and everything” (331). Read in this way, the performance is a means of constructing both the message and the self and passing it off as spontaneous exposition.

In the Prologue to the piece, Koba and Zach sit cross-legged at the front of the space, facing the spectators as they enter. At their immediate disposal, they have a slide projector, two overhead projectors and a laptop attached to speakers and printer. The lights dim. A slide show starts beginning with a blank slide. She sits viewing whilst he operates. The next slide is a teenage girl in a t-shirt reading / *Abuse of power comes as no surprise* / This is followed by a placard stating / *People before profits* / Bochner’s / *Language is not transparent* / *Question everything* / A cover of Bloomberg Business Week / *THE KIDS ARE NOT ALRIGHT* / *We try harder* / Graffiti / *Free Palestina* / The Apple logo with the text / *Think different* / The language of protest as both fashion commodity and capitalist appropriation. A protest banner reading / *Homosexuals are possessed by demons* / Barbara Kruger’s declarative / *I shop therefore I am* / presented in slick graphic design. Another protest banner / *I can’t believe we still have to protest this crap* / Four children holding placards, each with a single word / *protect the wild flowers* / A protest banner / *Fuck the pope, but use a condom* / Stencilled graffiti / *If you can’t take a joke you can get the fuck out of my house* / More graffiti / *We are fucking angry* / Jenny Holzer’s truism / *Protect me from what I want* / in bold neon light on Fifth Avenue / *Yesterday you said tomorrow* / Finally, a young woman holding a placard / *We cannot remain silent* / Return to blank slide.

He refocuses the projector onto the floor of the space and she stands in its light. She places a box of chalk on the floor and begins the process of writing. In the exact centre of the space she begins her personal exposition by writing */I/* and momentarily steps aside. This is the starting point, the beginning, the first coordinate in defining and locating herself within a world that she largely defines through opposition. In this exploration, there are traces of a self-trajectory that follows all the concerns of Socrates' "Know thyself" – an attempt to locate herself within a wider cosmic network where capitalism is the new religion. However, rather than merely reproduce/relocate this pre-modern concept of the self, it is put into an antithetical relationship with a post-modern view of the subject as fractured, partial, confusing and rhizomatic. Above the */I/* she writes */18/* Slightly below that she writes */Girl/* and above that she writes */Belgian/* These fundamental identifiers provide immediate definition of herself. She links these words up with interconnecting lines. She identifies her key family relationships */Mum/ /Father/ /Sister/* The sound of the chalk on the hard blackboard floor provides a percussive accompaniment to the rhythm of her writing that cuts sharply through the silence */Awesome. Single. Not a lot of money. Introvert/* The "I" provides the initial node of an ever increasing and complex web of words, terms, statements and sentences which, when linked up, provide rhizomatic exploration of her feelings. It is a map that is constantly modified through new additions, amendments and consideration of further sources. It is a Koba-machine in which the concern is not necessarily the pursuit of freedom, but "of finding a way out, or even a way in, another side, a hallway, an adjacency" (Deleuze & Guattari 1986: 7-8).

She returns to the inscribed */I/* and makes further emphasis of it by circling it several times. It reads like a desperate and pointless bid to define an innate core, particularly in the face of the complex subjective territory that is unfolding. She scribes

new interconnecting lines from the “I.” To these, she adds / *Think too much. Thin* / She erases the word / *thin* / She writes about her physical appearance / *Skinny (not anorexic)* / She starts to quote others’ perceptions of her / *I want your legs* / She takes a step back to read what she has written. She returns to the task of writing / *Don’t sleep well* / Further interrelationships between key words are marked with interconnecting lines. She uses a damp cloth to tidy up what she has written so far. She goes back and erases and replaces entire words and phrases to radically alter the meaning of what she has written. She writes about her education / *Study language* / Her own beliefs and prejudices / *Hate misogyny. Frustrated* / She begins writing in another section of the space / *Boys your age don’t go for girls like you* / Zach brings on a video camera on a tripod that is focused downwards onto her writing, projecting it onto the back wall. The writing now extends from SL to SR of the space. She begins to define herself in terms of paradoxes / *Like being alone. Like being with people. But not all of them* / He puts a soundtrack on the laptop / *For now, I do what is expected. Tomorrow I’ll do my thing* /

This initial exposition of self then progresses into an exposition of the world in which Koba finds herself / *Tomorrow I’ll do my thing* / is altered to become / *I will do my thing* / *My thing* / is underlined / *My thing* / is erased. Several attempts are made to replace it. It is replaced with /.... / and the caveat / *I want to understand everything* / This is a starting point for her to attempt to comprehend the wider issues of the world; it is a transitional point in the performance as her writing becomes about resistance: “in which the lexical tracing of fault lines between selves and institutions might sever diseased connections and engender healthier ones” (Frieze 2013: 323). Music builds and fills the space. She gets to her feet and walks around, examining what she has written. She continues to search out new starting points from that which she has already laid out, finding new interconnections and juxtapositions. Her pace of writing increases

substantially / *Crisis* / *Banks* / *Capitalism* / *Market* / *Jobs* / *Money* / She shifts to another area of the space and finds an entirely new starting point / *Flemish* / The camera follows the writing / *Politics* / At the very top she writes / *Hate* / *War* / *Hunger* / The addition of new words provides alternative frames from which to view and interpret all that has been written before. She erases / *hunger* / and rewrites it next to / *capitalism* / and / *money* / She tackles / *waste* / *environment* / and / *animals* / *People don't like vegetarians* / *Pain* / *Mental* / *Superficiality* / Entire sections are wiped out and replaced as she hones her reflections / *Beauty* / She steps back. More interconnecting points are transcribed with lines. She turns down the soundtrack a little / *We're missing something* / she says to him / *What about religion?* / he says. She swiftly returns to the floor / *And maybe sex?* / he says. She writes / *Love* / She erases it. She reinstates it. She adds / *fear* / She returns to the top and adds / *Racism* / *Power* / She drinks water. She returns to the task / *Greece* / *Spain* / *Jobs* / *Multinationals* /

She turns to other voices for inspiration by playing YouTube clips. There is a dystopian analysis of the economic state of Europe / *It's gonna crash. And it's gonna fall pretty hard because markets are ruled right now by fear. [...] I'm talking about the big funds, the hedge funds, the institutions, they don't buy this rescue plan, they basically know that the market is toast. The stock market is finished. The Euro as far as they are concerned they don't really care, they've moved their money into safer assets... so it's not gonna work...* / She notates key words. The male voice continues / *I go to bed every night and I dream of another recession. Why? Because people don't seem to really remember but the thirties depression wasn't just about market crash, there were some people prepared to make money from that crash. And I think anybody can do that. Anybody can actually make money ... it's an opportunity. This crisis is like a cancer. If you just wait, and wait, hoping that this is going to go away, just like a*

cancer it's going to grow ... it's wishful thinking that the government is going to sort things out... the governments don't rule the world... Goldman Sachs rules the world /

Other voices are heard: an economics professor defends sweat shops / *it is not about corporate profits, economic efficiency, it's about the welfare of the third world /* She continues to notate. A member of Congress argues that carbon dioxide is a natural by-product of nature, a harmless necessity to the environment and life cycle of earth.

Music plays underneath throughout. A myriad of voices fills the space – politicians and their opposing opinions, each providing her with further inspiration. The speed of her writing increases substantially. The blackboard is filled to its very edges. The politicians' voices become indecipherable. There is a first-hand account of violence at the hands of terrorists. Koba writes the word / *Guantanamo* / and then stops. The mood is bleak and stark. It is as if there's nothing she can do. She seems, for the time being at least, entirely overwhelmed by what needs fighting. It all feels like a completely impossible task.

It is at this critical point of the rising action that Zach joins her in writing on the floor. A rap song is interspersed with a punk track and more chaotic soundbites of voices. It becomes increasingly difficult to make out anything that is heard or written, particularly as chalk dust covers all the previously black floor, making deciphering individual words and phrases nigh on impossible. Both performers and spectators have become thoroughly overwhelmed by information. Things are crossed out. New entries made. Attempts are made to emphasise integral words by going over them with chalk, making them bold. As the work now reaches its crisis point, they place large metal letters over the chalked words to emphasise them – they are like letters from a huge and archaic printing press. The metal words clink in the space, cutting through the chaos of the soundscape with clarity / *DEATH / PAIN / HUNGER / POWER / POLITICS /*

VIOLENCE / SEX / LOVE / now become the integral needs and concepts. She scrawls on the OHP which projects on the side walls / *Who decides what's important? / I don't know shit / I still have blind spots / Indifference / Apathy / Denial* / She has reached: “a point of deficiency. Knowledge is insufficient and always will be, commitment is faltering. The writing on the wall disempowers her” (Goed 2014: 307). Zach continues to make suggestions as to what is missing / *Drugs / Homophobia* / perhaps. He provides further examples / *Nuclear waste / Things they've seen on Facebook / In India they are mutilating little kids so that they give more money when they beg* / The Environment. She places the word / *EVIL* / in metal letters onto the floor. She kneels in the middle of the floor surveying all that has been written. The music finishes. The writing on the OHP is projected directly onto her body.

As she switches off the OHPs, the work reaches its falling action (literally in terms of what follows). In the semi-darkness, she attaches a chain to the top of the blackboard that has been the stage floor and it is slowly lifted into the air. The metal words slide noisily to the bottom, creating “a thundering avalanche of clanking metal” (309). As the metal words are returned to being disconnected letters, no longer containing ascribed sense or meaning, she kneels at the foot of the elevated blackboard, surrounded by the now scattered metal letters. She starts writing again on the blank floor, this time with new resolutions in response to that which went before. It is her concluding paragraph to inspire all her future trajectories / *I / Want to stop wanting / To be perfect / Donated €30 once / Don't want to care / About money / Have the luxury to do so / Can give more / Will try not to buy / So they'll go bankrupt* / She snaps the chalk.

The performance reaches its anticipated catharsis which takes the form of an email. Zach asks / *Koba? Do you remember that email you sent? / Yes / Do you want*

to read it out loud right now? / No not really, but you can / He finds it and as he does so, she sits and listens. The opportunity to compose an email brings a temporary end to the chaotic influences and oppositions that have been previously investigated – words again providing a means to rationalise her feelings with lucidity. Her email recounts the experiences of a friend whose mother had a brain tumour. Each time she opened her front door, she was afraid to find her mother dead. Her friend can do nothing. Koba can do nothing. This leads her to articulate that */ I cannot resolve everything* / She questions her commitment to solving things in the future */ now I'm not so sure if that's gonna work out* / She ends with */ If you're going to live in a cabin in the woods, yelling you're not causing any problems anymore, you're not fixing them either right? There it is. Voila. Or not* / She takes the camera and photographs the back wall. She passes its memory card to Zach who processes the image on the laptop. Freize argues that this ending: “indicates Koba’s awareness of herself as a commodity, her sense that her ‘pure’ thought can only be displayed because it is ripe for reproduction and consumption” (2013: 328). There is certainly a parallel to be found with the images of protest made commodity in the opening to the performance. As he does so, she simultaneously wipes the following words into the back wall chalkings */ I will write / I will write / I will write* / He methodically prints up the photographs and each spectator is provided with one as they leave.

Title: *L'Enfant* by Musée de la Danse (Boris Charmatz)
Location: Sadler's Wells, London
Who: Nine adult dancers, three machines and twenty-seven children
When: 30th January 2014 ⁷⁶

L'Enfant is a work for nine adult dancers, three machines and twenty-seven children. Dominating the Sadler's Wells stage there is a crane, a curved ramp stretching up the rear wall complete with rotating floor and a central platform that pumps violently up and down. Chains connected to railings at the side of the stage are intricately ripped away by the crane which then, via a system of intricate cables, drags an amoebic formation through the murky shadow and across the floor from SR to SL. As this shifting mass becomes increasingly visible, I see that it consists of a mass of adult bodies that are now hauled to the crane's base, then elevated slowly to hang lifeless, like carcasses in an abattoir - one body hanging from the waist and another simply by its foot. The crane seems indecisive as to what exactly it should do with these bodies, now manoeuvring them through the air, as if contemplating where to finally lay them. These machines perhaps point towards the brutalist apparatus that we construct to control all aspects of our lives: with which and in which we manipulate ourselves and each other till we sleep or die.

At this point, other machines subsequently fire into action. Elevated bodies appear like dead weights, spun and flown through space because of the dynamic tension generated between gravity and machinic pull. The crane carefully lowers its human cargo onto the platform below which pumps vigorously up and down, seeming to

⁷⁶ The work premiered at Festival d'Avignon in 2011 and subsequently toured Europe, arriving at Sadler's Wells in January 2014.

generate the life-force of the work by powering all its arteries and circuits. Dressed in black in an environment that is now dimly lit with black/blue light, the adult dancers appear utterly subservient to these machines and seem to have little, if any, agency of their own in determining their own paths as the machines dictate all the physical encounters between their adult bodies. They are forced to twist, turn and pulsate in response to the platform's sharp movements; succumbing completely to the trajectories through which they are tossed and thrown. A male dancer attempts to travel independently up the rotating ramp at the back of the stage but, finding himself unable to stand, is repeatedly thrown back down to stage level. The sound of machines becomes deafening, like the industrial hub of a manufacturing plant, producing an incessant and uncomfortable soundscape that reverberates with loud metallic interference. Bodies repeatedly attempt to stand on the pulsating floor but, unable to find their balance, fall constantly into new formations. The physical forces generated by the machines completely invade the adult dancers' bodies who subsequently become mere objects: hauled, hurled and jerked around the space.

Fired by these machinic structures, which are themselves powered by unseen off stage forces, the adult bodies are continually shifted around in generative networks of flow. Deleuze and Guattari state that: "A machine may be defined as a system of interruptions or breaks" (2004: 36) since flow never has a beginning nor end to its process and is always interrupted and subsequently modified. What I witness here is each individual dancer's attempts at agentful action function as a circuit breaker and modifier to the larger networks of flow to which they are connected and pitted against. Many of these actions fail outright because of the external physical forces that subsume them, providing interruption to flow which, in turn, generates new choreography. In these ever-shifting equations of flow, each dancer becomes entirely interchangeable as

focus is placed upon the continuous and generative nature of their interrelationships, rather than on the individual. Subsequently, each adult dancer becomes a shifting node within a much larger network of circuits, always in the process of forming but never quite becoming. In many ways, this provides an alternative perspective to Foucault's portrayal of subjectivation within the power/knowledge dynamic through the demonstration and embodiment of subjectivity as a system of machines that operate as interruption to flow.

Other adult dancers slip subtly into the space, now carrying and dragging the lifeless bodies of many small children. The children have their eyes closed and are otherwise inert and immobile, manipulated rather like puppets. For approximately twenty minutes, the grown-ups play with them: tossing them high into the air, mobilising them to walk and ride their backs and shoulders. However, unlike the animated puppet whose function is usually to project the illusion of having life, these children remain utterly lifeless. I find it somewhat disturbing when confronted by such a sheer number of empty bodies; each seemingly vacated of the unpredictable and frenetic energies of the child. Inevitably perhaps, my first sense is of an aura of death or maybe even of enforced sedation pervading the space. I think of the Holocaust, Rwanda and images of dead Palestinian and Syrian children. The towering adults emerge like expressionless undertakers who reanimate these little inanimate corpses. They hold and rock them protectively in intricate choreography which later builds into something more like manic and macabre Bunraku puppetry. In antithesis to the increasingly frantic energies of the adult dancers, I find the consistency of the childrens' stillness breathtaking, particularly in terms of how they hand over entire responsibility for the care of their bodies. The adult bodies intricately manipulate the inert child bodies which always fully submit to the adult's external impulse.

A boy, of perhaps six or seven, is manipulated by two adult dancers on top of a now lifeless adult male body in a sort of contact improvisation where adult hands intricately place and constantly reposition him. An adult woman, holding a girl's body by the waist, walks upstage whilst attempting to resist the gravitational momentum of the shifting ramp which succeeds in constantly impeding her journey. Two adults travel slowly and ceremoniously from the back wall of the stage. Between them they hold a boy, his eyes closed and his body transmitting no glimmer of aliveness. They set out to make precise choreography with his listless body - lifting him high into the air and then promptly lowering him, carefully, to the floor. Lifeless children's bodies now litter the entire space. Negotiated like fragile props, they are lifted and dropped, swooped through the air and exchanged between the adults. An adult rolls slowly around the space, protectively embracing the body of a girl. Elsewhere, a boy is lifted onto an adult's shoulders whose own journey is subsequently interrupted and so in turn drops to the floor as the child continues to be supported to move and flow in an uninterrupted manner, made to turn and twist.

The woman who has been repeatedly attempting to walk up the moving ramp now falls to the floor, taking the girl with her, rolling slowly back down the ramp whilst protecting the child's body. Physical images incessantly shift and form. The lifeless children are rarely left alone, always being manipulated into new positions and relations - sometimes giving the impression that they are experiencing weightlessness. A woman lies on her back holding a child aloft her. She scrabbles across the space using her feet to propel her whilst the sound of machinery provides a percussive accompaniment to her jolting and angular movements. She briefly stops and the child is simply lowered and lies inanimate on top of her. Another adult crawls on all fours as a child is manipulated by two other adults to ride effortlessly on his back. These

interactions between adult and child, as a progression from the previous interactions between adult and machine, confirm the conception of the body here as a machinic assemblage - its function no longer drawing upon any idea of interior truth or identity, but on the assemblages it goes on to form with other bodies (Malins 2005: 84). The concept is particularly enhanced here by the presence of the comatose body and undermines any notion of subjectivity as a unified, fixed or bounded body. These insentient beings are entirely dependent upon the other bodies and machines which formulate assemblages with them.

I find the way in which the adult dancers confidently touch, hold and manipulate these children equally liberating and disconcerting. The work seems to operate through the childrens' bodies and, with that, I find myself programmed to search for evidence of bleaker undercurrents of abuse. And I certainly find these: from the violent movements to which they all submit, the sinister apocalyptic soundscape provided by the machinery, a later inclusion of Michael Jackson's *Billie Jean* and appearance of an ominous figure that resembles the Pied Piper which they later all follow. Each seems to signify that there is something much darker at work here - the lyrics of Jackson's song seeming to evoke a tension between the accuser and accused that is never resolved, along with a complete denial of paternal responsibility that is embedded within the lyrics.⁷⁷

The unease that I experience here is partly evoked, I think, from placement of children within a theatrical frame that they are unlikely to fully fathom themselves;

⁷⁷ And then, of course, there is the figure of Jackson himself that is evoked here - an adult who apparently refused the responsibilities of adulthood, along with the allegations of abuse that he himself was subject to in the early Nineties.

giving rise to questions about responsibility and the absence of any mutual negotiation of the way in which the child's own presence signifies within the live performance event. Questions of how and when to look at and, if necessary, touch children are always extremely fervent ones. Indisputable, perhaps, is that in their physical interactions with the adults in this work, these children always seem to be treated with care and dignity and that they are, if anything, subsequently reinvested with traditional ideals of childhood. The physical interactions in which they find themselves generally seem benign, characterised by an innate protectiveness and high levels of responsibility - the child is always treated as innocent "allowing them to be brave, bold, joyful, equal to and not separate from adults." ⁷⁸

On Charmatz's website, he employs the following quotation from Lyotard as a means of framing this work:

Shorn of speech, incapable of standing upright, hesitating over the objects of its interest, not able to calculate its advantages, not sensitive to common reason, the child is eminently the human because its distress heralds and promises things possible. Its initial delay in humanity, which makes it the hostage of the adult community, is also what manifests to this community the lack of humanity it is suffering from, and which calls on it to become more human. ⁷⁹

For Lyotard, the adult in this relation is endowed with "the means of knowing and making known, of doing and getting done" (1991: 4) which seems to materialise here in the emotionless vacuum in which the adults attend to the practicalities of physically manoeuvring the children around the space. Lyotard depicts the child as caught in a hostage relation to the adult, embodying potentiality and becoming, as a site of

⁷⁸ Higginbottom, K, 2014. *Boris Charmatz/Musee De La Danse: Enfant*. [Website] Available from: <http://bellyflopomag.com/reviews/boris-charmatzmusee-de-la-danse-enfant> [23/02/16]

⁷⁹ Taken from *The Inhuman* (Lyotard 1991: 3-4)

repentance and new becoming for the adult. An alternative perspective can additionally be envisaged by instead aligning these lifeless children's bodies as a burden to the adults, particularly because they always require a high degree of responsibility and always need to be attended to. In this respect, the adults might be regarded as the hostages of these children, especially as the inert bodies are devoid of sight and subsequently at their most vulnerable.

This notion of the adult as hostage to the child is confirmed by Levinas who argues that the child is an Other who substantially alters the existence of the parent: "My child is a stranger (Isiah 49), but a stranger who is not only mine, for he is me. He is a stranger to myself" (1999: 267). For Levinas, the arrival of the child interrupts adult being by making it multiple and "split into the same and the other" (269) through which the adult self subsequently becomes a stranger to itself. "Being" the child requires being responsible, not only for the child but also for the child's responsibilities, which the adult has not chosen or initiated. Being responsible for the Other's (child's) responsibility is to have one's own identity disrupted but not obliterated entirely. The child is never merely a "repetition" or "reiteration" of the self (Tally 2013: 268) - the child is a stranger and a newcomer, and as such brings a future that is discontinuous with the past and present. The identity of the parent is neither extended nor extinguished in the arrival of the child, rather it recommences or starts anew (Guenther 2006:79). From this perspective of the arrival of the child as disruptive and generative in relation to the adult's own subjectivity, *L'Enfant* perhaps becomes an essay about the unknowingness and uncertainty of the futurity of one's own self depicted through this specific theatrical temporality.

The frantic rhythm of machines comes to be replaced by stillness and, with that, an evading silence that is punctuated only by the sound of feet on the stage floor evades

the space. Children's bodies are littered around the stage, always being returned to by the adult dancers - moved, readjusted, and never quite ever left alone. The physical images into which the children are formed are always subtly changing, never quite fully materialising, before becoming something else. Whilst the narrative of machines manipulating the bodies of lifeless adults had been the preamble to this work, it is the subsequent handling of children by the adults that now becomes the key concern. There is one repetitive movement that stands out here for me whereby an adult lifts the child from behind, arms braced underneath the child's and hands squarely fixed on each side of the child's face. The effect is startling and a little off-putting, giving the distinct impression of the child being swung ruthlessly around by its head: suddenly to the floor, quickly to the left and right, and then trailed through the air like the ribbon employed by the rhythmic gymnast. An adult male balances a slumped child on his shoulders. Shifting precariously back and forth, he uses the dynamic weight of the child to counterbalance his own movement and define the trajectory of his own journeys. Another child is manipulated vigorously. He is flung around alongside an adult's body in a loose physical duet. His eyes are closed, his entire body relaxed and entirely submissive to the adult's physical power.

The same child is shaped into an image of the *Pieta*, locks of blonde hair falling across his face - he seems briefly mourned for, protected, remembered. He is lowered to the floor as the adult body lies on top and completely envelops him. The child has no response. Elsewhere two adults manipulate the children sat on their laps, speedily crossing and uncrossing their arms and attempting to reanimate them in a sort of rudimentary *Punch and Judy* scene. Another has a child balanced over one of his shoulders in an unsecured fireman's lift. He runs up the ramp at the rear of the stage, the combined weight of bodies forcing him to return to the bottom each time. He

attempts it again and again, before falling and quickly inserting his body between the ramp and child to cushion its fall. Another child is lifted high above the head of an adult dancer, like the victory catch of a game hunt or perhaps even a sacrifice. Whilst the increasingly chaotic manipulation of inert child bodies might seem disconcerting, particularly when framed by media frenzy around inappropriate adult contact, it must be stressed here that the children are never merely raw putty with which the adults make the work since, as the performance progresses, they eventually become its co-creators by interrupting their own inertia and then going on to manipulate the adults who eventually yield their own agency to them.

The adults crouch ominously around a heap of sleeping children. For a moment, they appear like Hitchcock's crows, producing guttural, visceral sounds that alert perhaps of encroaching danger or are produced in the act of grief. This encroachment of the children soon disintegrates as they begin wandering aimlessly around the space. The adults sing and it is at that moment that the children's eyes begin to open as they gradually come to life and, for the first time, initiate physical actions of their own. A bagpipe plays and the children's bodies become increasingly animated, finally releasing their raw, unpolished, frenetic and unbounded energies. As the children begin to stand, the visual dynamic of the space changes entirely. One child starts stomping, lifting arms and legs, producing a rudimentary choreography that is in antithesis to the tender and intricate flow accomplished by the adults in the earlier sections. Other children join and eventually all participate, adults included, in a sudden explosion of raw movement. All are united in the shared task of frantically pursuing an adult bagpiper. The vocals of Michael Jackson's *Billie Jean* play over the ominous industrial score and the adult dancers respond with movements that have nuances of Jackson's iconic choreography. The haphazard and erratic procession of adults and children that has formed behind the

bagpiper has the feeling of Bruegel's *The Blind Leading the Blind* (1568) depicting inept, sight-less beggars linked together, falling and stumbling aimlessly to the ground.

Meanwhile, the bagpiper now lies on his side, playing his instrument vigorously as chaos ensues around him. The now largely bare adult and child torsos are striking against the blue/black tones of the austere scenography; the appearance of flesh making this work seem even more visceral. The bagpiper is connected to the crane by one of the children. He is elevated into the air high above the stage by his ankle and left there, piping upside down, in a reversal of the expected outcome of the Pied Piper fable - all have been emancipated from the fate that is implied by its presupposed narrative. I read the initial presence of the bagpiper as the determined efforts of the social world to subject the child's unruly body, an attempt perhaps to organise and define the child subject. Whilst initially succumbing to the prescribed parameters for identity construction offered here (following the bagpiper and performing choreography together), these children also repel them by identifying the cracks and fissures in the narrative to which they are expected to conform, so retaining their energies to continue to form new assemblages which subsequently generate new possibilities and potentials.

As the children frantically wander around beneath the bagpiper, they seem left completely to their own devices and without direct interference from the adults who now lie inanimate around the space. The relations have become reversed. A transference of spirit has taken place between the professional and amateur dancers, between the living and the dead, the non-sedated and sedated, the active and passive, the awake and the sleeping, the adult and child. As the children attempt to haul the adult dancers over themselves, using their own bodies like little turning logs underneath the heavy inert weights to transfer them across the space - they have both become and replaced. They dance directly on top of the adults, around them and through them. They

run, dart and fall. It is rather like the population of Lilliput playing with lots of inanimate Gullivers. Left to their own devices, they work intricately together to shift and animate the lifeless adult bodies. And then the bagpipe stops and the percussive sound of feet leaping across the space takes over, infiltrated by the guttural sounds of children at play. Some march, some run, some tend to the adult bodies and become engaged in more intimate transactions with just fingers and hands. The now unruly, and at times anarchic, presence of the now animated children reads as a spontaneous and creative resistance to the generally orderly operation of the adults in the earlier sections.



Figure 29: *L'Enfant* (Source: Musée de la Danse)



Figure 30: *L'Enfant* (Source: Musée de la Danse)



Figure 31: *L'Enfant* (Source: Musée de la Danse)



Figure 32: *L'Enfant* (Source: Musée de la Danse)

GOING FORWARD

Throughout these creative works, there have emerged specific strategies that explore post-dramatic realities, bodies, subjectivities and spectatorship that have potential for application in formulating an approach to PDT as a counter-apparatus for radical pedagogy. Of course, how far any of the child and teenage performers were even partially aware of their association with these strategies is another question entirely; one that could only be answered through extensive qualitative research which is not the subject nor method of this project. In identifying and making application of what might become the concerns of a radical pedagogic process, it is critical to ensure that their significance goes beyond mere recognition of their existence by the spectator: young people's awareness of, and decision making in, the orchestration of such strategies must become the crux of their potential mobilisation within pedagogic processes. This, in many ways, is the challenge of Part Three in seeking to next make application of the findings of Parts One and Two to practice. The following summarises and briefly reflects upon some of the ideas that will be taken forward.

In many of the works explored here, there emerges a common commitment to destabilising concepts of authentic-ness, real-ness and present-ness. For example, children and teenagers are depicted as having control of their own temporality, able to inhabit what are at times elaborate temporal loops exceeding simple passage from the past to the future and, in one case, occupying a synchronous state of fast forward and rewind (*üBUNG*). They actively manipulate stutters and slippages in tense between past and present, and the real and the hypothetical, exposing the construction of the present moment (*All That is Wrong*). Or, sometimes, they purposefully blur the parameters of the real and fictional through the direct use of autobiographical content that makes it difficult to decipher between the two (*Airport Kids*, *Before Your Very Eyes*). In one

case, what initially appears as a spontaneous depiction of limitless teenage energy is revealed to be intricate choreography when a chaotic and lengthy sequence is reframed many times to eventually divulge its constructed-ness (*Once and For All...*). Where there is slippage in the presentation of the seemingly real, so there is also the implication that the idea of fixed templates for subjectivity are as equally manufactured, fragile and subject to failure. PDT emerges here as a productive site for children and teenagers to exploit all the ambiguity and uncertainty of the real.

There are examples throughout of the purposeful deconstruction of representational mechanisms – for example, in *üBUNG*, the children's bodies are actively exploited as instruments of de-representation, their presence operating somewhere between traditional, psychological approaches to dramatic representation as represented by the cinematic adults and the starker exposure of their bodily materiality within the post-dramatic frame. Demonstrating the way in which representation always remains an integral ally to PDT, we encounter examples of young people actively taking control of the mechanisms of self-representation – for example, in *Teenage Riot*, where they present highly selective and mediated images of themselves for the adult spectator's reception. In this specific example, young people are depicted as having ownership of the way in which the adult spectator reads the signals that they construct and transmit, and the adult spectator is subsequently parodied for their belief in what they receive and read.

What surfaces in these works is a common commitment to the collaborative development of critical frames on constructs of reality. This has enormous potential for the formulation of a radical pedagogy of PDT that seeks to creatively derail dominant procedures of representation and subjectivation. Etchells' work with the young people of *That Night Follows Day*, for example, aims to make discernible the category of

childhood: aiding its young participants to develop a critical awareness of both its limitations and its impact on their own subjectivities. Devriendt, in the process for *Teenage Riot*, invests in fostering the teenagers' sense of resistance to societal structures - asking them to consider what they see as wrong with the world, what they disagree with, to compare their own experiences with the generation before them, to identify their criticisms of adults and ask themselves where their riot and rebellion resides (Goed 2014: 229). And, of course, resistance to societal structures forms the entire infrastructure for the post-dramaturgy of *All That is Wrong*.

The immediacy of the presence of the post-dramatic body is capitalised upon in many of these works. In *Before Your Very Eyes*, detail from the past lives of the child/teenage performers is used at the outset of the performance and is made to seem more 'real' through them having been captured on film several years earlier. Dialogues between past and present selves are authenticated further by the apparent ageing of each performer - in children and teenagers just a few years usually results in a very marked physical difference. The performers reject their on-screen slightly younger selves as being 'childish' or 'nerdy' and embark instead on constructing fictional autobiographies of their future selves which just so happen to be the lifespan roles many of the spectators will already have played within their own lives. When the body of the child/teenager is juxtaposed on stage with the body of the adult, the temporal interrelationship of the two becomes significant and marked (*üBUNG* and *L'Enfant*). Although the post-dramatic body is not necessarily automatically encoded with the signifiers of representation, the spectator may find themselves applying those frames in seeking out a sense of reciprocity between adult and child bodies - reading the bodies of children/teenagers as that which the adults once were and, simultaneously, the adult

bodies as what these children will become.⁸⁰ In *L'Enfant*, the presence of adult bodies alongside comatose children offers an image of children trapped in hostage relation to the adult. Alternative perspectives can also be envisaged through aligning the lifeless children's bodies as a burden to the adults, particularly because of the high degree of responsibility that they require: the adults instead becoming hostage to the children. There are examples of the immediate presence of the young person's body being used to evoke a concept of adulthood that is vacuous, grotesque or artificial (*üBUNG* and *Before Your Very Eyes*). In one case, this is made more acute through the juxtaposition of virtuoso performances from children that provide a sharp focus of quasi reality against the artificial representational practices of a monochrome film (*üBUNG*).

Many of the children and teenagers here have a resistant presence, particularly in terms of their constant, ruthless and sometimes unpredictable to and fro between frames of representation and the real. Whilst we see the child/teenager's body placed within power structures that require it to be subjected, used, transformed and improved (*That Night Follows Day*), many of the young people offer up an extremely resistant presence - particularly when they struggle with the formality of the presentational strategies within which they operate. Docile bodies become disobedient bodies that provide both unconscious and intentional motor challenges to expected on-stage behaviours (*That Night Follows Day*). We see children and teenagers resist and subvert the formalised structures within which they are placed, discerning the gaps within them and making space for themselves as individuals. This sense of opposition becomes a key component for a radical pedagogy that seeks to carve out critical territory within

⁸⁰ In Campo's *Victor* (2015), an adult male (Jan Martens) and young boy (Peter Seynaeve) perform a 60-minute physical duet that is at once a narrative of their relationship, but additionally and perhaps inevitably explores a similar kind of temporal interrelationship.

which to instigate PDT as a counter-apparatus of representation and subjectivation.

There is often a keen focus on the futurity and the potentiality of the child/teenager's body in these works. In *Haircuts by Children*, the adult spectator is required to assume complete responsibility for the child's future well-being and sense of self-esteem through submitting to whatever aesthetic choices the child stylist makes. In *üBUNG*, there is that moment at the end of the performance in which the children seem to briefly exist in a state of both potentiality and impotentiality, finally removing their replica adult clothing and exiting the performance space with an optimism that might just suggest that they are able to take control of their own futures. Conversely, there are also very depressing examples where children/teenagers have the potentiality to design their own futures, but fall back instead on the brutality of the practices of the adults to which they largely aspire (*Airport Kids*).

There are examples of young people rejecting psychological representations of the subject towards exploration of more alternative and unorthodox forms of subjectivity. Dominant procedures of subjectivation are openly mocked and the role model that the adult usually provides effectively undermined. When *All That is Wrong* begins with its central figure chalking the personal pronoun "I" in the exact centre of the performance space, she provides a first coordinate for defining herself by locating herself, but this becomes rapidly undermined as a concept of unity when it becomes clear that she can only define herself through opposition. This results in a depiction of her own subjectivity that is entirely rhizomatic, fragmented, often contradictory and always partial. In *üBUNG*, psychological representations of the adult subject are copied to abstraction and, by never quite reproducing the behaviours of their adult counterparts, the on-stage children remain largely disassociated from the iniquitous intent of the adult on-screen figures. Their physical and vocal acts are never completely

successful in reconstructing the adult “I” to which they constantly refer and so the concept of identity is uncovered as an ideal that can never be fully accomplished, always repeated as part of an endless and failing cycle.

Exploration of the fragmented and rhizomatic nature of post-modern identity is perhaps most evident within *L'Enfant* when the arrival of the child initiates a disruptive and degenerative force upon the adults' own subjectivities, evoking a sense of the unknowingness and uncertainty of the futurity of the adult's own self. Here we see the notion of the machinic assemblage emerge through physical interaction as each individual dancer functions as a circuit breaker and modifier to the larger networks of flow to which they are connected and pitted against. In the ever-shifting equations of flow, each dancer becomes entirely interchangeable as focus is placed instead upon the continuous and generative nature of their interrelationships, as opposed to them as fixed individuals. Each of the child and adult dancers subsequently becomes an ever-shifting node within a larger network of circuits - always in the process of forming but never quite becoming.

In terms of spectatorship, each of these works demands a very specific interrelationship with their adult spectator - ensuring that they always play an instrumental role in meaning making. In *Haircuts by Children* both the child performer and adult spectator endure the same reality with an ultra-immediacy that places risk at the core of the interaction. This requires an urgent negotiation of co-presence that additionally necessitates the adult's reconsideration of expected power relations within adult/child relationships. Power relations become unstable, renegotiated, disordered and unpredictable – interrupting expected notions of the adult and child, professional and amateur, and performer and spectator. *Before Your Very Eyes* requires its adult spectator to become their own auto-ethnographer, examining the templates for

subjectivity that they have already assumed in a bid to use the children/teenager's depiction of them as a benchmark to critically reflect on what they have not become. In *That Night Follows Day*, there is a sense of having to reflect on one's own subjecting behaviours that may have had influence on the child.

Moving now into Part Three, this project takes a more distinctly pedagogical turn that takes forward some of these ideas into formulating an approach to a radical pedagogy of PDT. Through a critical account of practice, it argues that PDT has a unique capacity to provide an innovative counter-apparatus for radical pedagogy that enables its participants to co-author acts of creative resistance outside of the modes of theatrical production that are often prescribed for and expected of young people.

PART THREE

PDT AS A COUNTER-APPARATUS FOR RADICAL PEDAGOGY *IN PRACTICE*

EXPOSITION

From a perspective that now originates from within the messy terrain of performance making, I look for possibilities to thoroughly exploit PDT as an apparatus for radical pedagogy *in practice*. I have already argued that PDT has significant potential as a counter-apparatus for radical pedagogy in providing a productive site from which to make transparent and confront the political apparatuses of the everyday: “literally anything that has in some way the capacity to capture, orient, determine, intercept, model, control, or secure the gestures, behaviors, opinions, or discourses of

living beings” (Agamben 2009: 14). If the framework of PDT is mobilised to instigate: “the relentless fight between living beings and apparatuses...not destroying them or using them in the correct way, but bringing them back into 'common use'”(17), then its function becomes a matter of ensuring that the individual has opportunity to (i) intervene in their own processes of de-subjection, and (ii) explore alternative and unorthodox, perhaps substitute forms/means of subjectivity away from those prescribed by contemporary apparatuses.

This enquiry into PDT's potentiality as a counter-apparatus for radical pedagogy situates myself as professional teacher and practitioner. It emerges from my own immersion in a range of processes that have generated performance works over several years; each of which has made a significant contribution to my own grasp of the pedagogic processes potentially available when making PDT with young people. I draw here specifically on the experience of making three performance works between 2012 and 2014, each of which is partially re-staged to identify meaningful aspects of process and performance that allow for further scrutiny and expansion of the idea of a radical pedagogy of PDT. These performance works are: *All Straight in a Line or Wild Like Thorns* (2012), *Think of Me Sometime* (2013), and *Music to Be Murdered By* (2014).

All Straight in a Line or Wild Like Thorns set out to investigate representations of youth in popular culture through a collaborative process that dissected iconic Twentieth Century Hollywood films made between the 1950s and 1980s depicting youth culture. The work examined four iconic films: *Rebel Without a Cause* (1955), *Zabriskie Point* (1970), *Saturday Night Fever* (1977) and *Heathers* (1988); each of which was to provide a frame from which student performers had the opportunity to make direct critical and practical intervention into the systems by which society transcribes its regimes of truth about young people and the interrelationship of these

subsequent representations of youth with power. In transposing Chekhov's *The Seagull* to post-dramatic mode, *Think of Me Sometime* located itself in a space somewhere between Chekhov's original text and a 1975 American film version⁸¹ of the play. Its central premise involved taking Chekhov's central construct of an experimental performance occurring within a naturalistic play, and switching this to an alternative one in which a naturalistic film of the play occurs within an experimental performance. Through its specific mode of performance, the subsequent work became a treatise on processes that shape subjectivity, particularly in relation to the ideals of self-promotion and self-commodification associated with the neoliberal frame. *Music to Be Murdered By* emerged from collaborative deconstruction of Hitchcock's *Rear Window* (1954), *Psycho* (1960) and *The Birds* (1963). It involved student performers replicating, resisting and subverting the power relations entrenched within the codes and conventions of Hitchcock's films in their own translation of them to the post-dramatic stage.⁸²

Location

The black box studio within which this practice has taken place is located within a College of Further Education in Aberystwyth.⁸³ Its uneven plastered walls scarcely conceal the traces of many prior incarnations, hasty conversions and on-going repairs. In a previous manifestation, some fifteen years ago, it was a college training

⁸¹ This 1975 film was adapted from a production of the Williamstown Theatre Festival, and features Lee Grant, Frank Nigella and Olympia Dukakis.

⁸² A more recent work – *All Work and No Play* (2015) explored Kubrick's *The Shining* (1980) through re-enactment of the original film in synchronisation with, and in full view of, the original. The focus here was on destabilising concepts of present-ness and real-ness, exploring the gulf between truth and fiction and investigating the potential for PDT to operate as mirror image of the mechanisms of the spectacle/simulacrum.

⁸³ Coleg Ceredigion is a rural, bilingual further education college in Wales with campuses in Aberystwyth and Cardigan. Each year it has approximately 600 to 700 full-time learners, over 70% of which are aged between 16 and 24.

restaurant. I recollect purple carpets and purple walls with grotesquely patterned curtains on now permanently concealed windows. Awkward young students, formally attired in the uniform black and white of the service industry, float around; compliant subjects who are attentive to the needs of adult diners in an overtly friendly yet deferential manner. At some point, I/We present performances on those purple carpets and, sometime after that, gain official residency of that space; given carte blanche to elevate its ceilings, rip out its carpets, conceal its windows and eventually install a specialist lighting grid. Ornate light fittings are roughly hacked out of walls and the resulting empty cavities are crudely plastered over. Dimmer packs are hastily screwed onto those walls and large sections of plaster gouged out to lay a complex infrastructure of submerged cable. Large sheets of painted black ply are screwed onto the floor and all signs of its prior manifestations are, over time, concealed beneath the heavy stratification of many subsequent years of Flint's theatre paint. Whilst still situated and operating within the rigid parameters of the educational institution, the relations of power and ideology that were inherent in that prior manifestation of the space start to shift somewhat: in favour of one where more open ended, self-determined and creative interventions into potentialities for subjectivity can now be explored.

Trying to define the way in which the political space of the educational institution might play a role in the subjectivation of both teacher maker and student performer is a tricky task when it is narrated from a personal perspective that is embedded so deeply within it. Freire argues that modern educational institutions are merely mechanisms for dehumanisation, serving only to replicate and reinforce the status quo (1996: 44); advice that seems even more poignant considering neoliberalism's contemporaneous impact upon pedagogical processes. The drama studio within the educational institution is potentially a dissonant space in which there might

seem at times to be mutually incompatible values in operation to those of the larger organisation within which it is located. To the external eye, such a space might even at times seem representative of Hakimby's notion of *The Temporary Autonomous Zone* (1985): a miniature anarchist society in which structures of authority are suspended. Yet, for all its and my idealistic ambition, the studio within which this practice has developed is constantly interrupted and directly affected by the sounds, smells and politics of the larger institutional space within which it is situated. What emerges is a productive collision of adjacent ideological spaces necessitating tricky navigation of overlapping, sometimes even antithetical border zones; a precarious existence that produces a rather nomadic image of both the teacher maker and student performer as figures of a resistance: "that is not exterior to relations of power, but exerts a force within their elaborate, mobile, and ever shifting web of spatial arrangements" (Tally 2013: 139).

Like Freire before him, Giroux describes the educational institution as a place that "produces a particular selection and ordering of narratives and subjectivities," that is "deeply political and unarguably normative" and produces "particular stories of how to live ethically and politically" (1992: 90-91). He later expands this depiction into a dystopian vision of pedagogically incarcerated subjectivities; the direct consequence of neoliberalism's "theater of cruelty" (2014: 2) which has generated pedagogies that value only particular representations of the self in relation to specific types of knowledge allied to obvious and tangible economic worth. Althusser (1971) had already depicted subjectivation under capitalism as the effect of productive forces, conditions and relations of production that occur through the Ideological State Apparatuses - ensuring that the workforce is always exploited and appropriately subjectivated. In the same way, neoliberalism demands that its values, meanings and

logic be reproduced within the educational Ideological State Apparatus through explicit definition of “not only [how] to behave in certain ways, but be certain types of people” (Mansfield 2000: 53).

Neoliberalism’s increasingly powerful and repressive grasp on pedagogy makes it progressively difficult for both teachers and students to “take risks, imagine the otherwise, and push against the grain” with the result that young people subsequently find themselves bereaved of opportunity to “imagine a different and more critical mode of subjectivity and alternative mode of politics” (Giroux 2014: 14). As curriculum design becomes increasingly pressured to be more and more attentive to market forces, neoliberalism’s current war on pedagogy can be interpreted as a struggle to manufacture automative and docile young people who are only being equipped to comply with and perpetuate the ever-increasing demands of an all-encompassing consumer culture.⁸⁴ Subsequently, resistance to such all-encompassing modes of subjectivation and thinking critically about one’s own existence are processes that are becoming re-patented as threatening, anarchistic and openly parodied acts; of which the only perceived outcome can be the inconvenient disruption of the machinic operation of the status quo.

When neoliberal pedagogies are employed to shape students into active consumers/compliant subjects, it is convenient if those same students are being actively discouraged from thinking critically about themselves in relation to their own operation within their wider societal contexts. McChesney (1999: 9) argues that neoliberalism is perhaps at its most efficient when there seems to exist a formal electoral democracy but its population is simultaneously diverted from the information required for meaningful

⁸⁴ The monumental scale and influence of this ideological project was encapsulated over thirty years ago in Margaret Thatcher’s statement: “Economics are the method; but the object is to change the heart and the soul” (Butt: 1981).

participation in decision-making. He argues that the essential by-product of the current neoliberal climate, which additionally ensures a firm grasp on subjectivation, is “a depoliticized citizenry marked by apathy and cynicism” (1991: 11).

The central concern/ambition of a radical pedagogy of PDT must therefore be to establish productive conditions that inspire young people to develop deep and critical understandings of themselves within their own social, cultural and political contexts. In doing so, a radical pedagogy of PDT should strive to engender resistance to those enforced forms of subjectivity that might be deemed to be both the effect and instrument of neoliberal power. As participants in radical pedagogic processes, student performers should have the opportunity to creatively and critically intervene in processes of their own subjectivation - in Foucault’s words, aiming “not to discover what we are, but to refuse what we are” (1994: 336). As I have established previously, Foucault never provides anything that ever amounts to a prescriptive account as to what the new forms of subjectivity emerging from such refusal might be; his overriding ambition seems to lie in critically re-examining existing prototypes of subjectivity as fictional constructs that are to be “exploded or remodelled as a subversion of the demands power places on us” (Mansfield 2000: 64). PDT as a counter-apparatus for radical pedagogy offers a productive arena within which rather more alternative, critical and perhaps unorthodox modes of subjectivity can subsequently be explored and enacted.

Key Relationships

In seeking out ways in which to articulate PDT as a counter-apparatus for radical pedagogy, I have generally positioned myself within what amounts to a zone of contention emerging from persistently having to navigate the complex terrain between being required to be both a “convener of customs” and “cultural provocateur”

(McLaren 1988: 172) – at once promoting the interests of an institutional approach to pedagogy and simultaneously breaking all the rules of this. This is always a difficult, complex and often entirely unstable place to inhabit, but provides an abstract foundation from which to hypothetically reconfigure teacher/student relations since it provides a precarious yet immediate position to operate both ‘inside’ and ‘outside’ of the educational institution. The resultant nomadic movement to and fro, and across political and cultural space has some value in (i) aiding the development of students’ critical awareness of their own immediate context by making it strange and (ii) starting to make transparent the power relations that might ruthlessly shape that. Whilst unbalanced power play always inevitably perseveres within all teacher/student relations, any endeavour to even partially alleviate it, or at least take a step back from it, seems to offer opportunities to acquire productive conditions that might encourage critical intervention.

When the call finally comes, at the outset of the performance making process, to modify that dearly held place of *I* with the more relational, productive, yet always problematic *We*, I always welcome it as a desired trajectory; for in that place lies the potential to avoid the limiting influence of the subordination of one intelligence to another, an effect that Rancière identifies as stultification (1991: 13).⁸⁵ However, one

⁸⁵ Rancière’s key text on pedagogy, *The Ignorant Schoolmaster* (1991) provides an account of Joseph Jacotot, a lecturer in French literature who had a significant “intellectual adventure” (1) entirely premised on the fact that a good number of his students that could not speak French and he knew no Flemish and “there was thus no language in which he could teach them what they sought from him” (2). So, in order to respond to their needs he was required to seek out “a thing in common” (2) between himself and them which took the form of a bilingual edition of *Télémaque* that was to become the key mechanism in aiding his students to learn French. His approach to teaching and learning resulted in the rejection of methods of explication/explanation as core strategies of pedagogy; a shift away from the idea of the master transmitting his (sic) knowledge to his students so as to eventually bring them to his own level of expertise. It is a “pedagogical myth” (7) argues Rancière, that divides the world into two by determining both inferior and superior intelligence. The superior intelligence allows the master to transmit his own knowledge by adapting it to the intellectual capacities of the student which allows him to verify that the student has satisfactorily understood what he has learned - “such is the principle of explication. From this point on, for Jacotot, such will be the principle of enforced stultification.” (7)

should always bear in mind that the rather opaque and unreliable place of *We* can never be fully and effectively realised for, as Derrida states: “there is no ‘we’ in nature, one cannot find it or touch it...It’s a fiction, a promise, a call, an ideal, a hope.”⁸⁶

Throughout making the works cited here, I increasingly experimented with hypothetically locating myself within the more relational territory of *I/We* which was to provide rich terrain from which to work to uncover the limitations of fixed concepts of subjectivity because of the way in which it necessitates the embodiment and articulation of border zones where meanings and ideas about subjectivity must be continually juxtaposed and renegotiated. Working with more relational ideas of subject formation additionally aids in undermining any of the neoliberalist notions that promote the idea of the isolated individual as the basic unit of society who pursues, and is highly rewarded for, complete self-interest.

Freire resolves to shift the balance of what he depicts as the always-contradictory teacher/student power relation by attempting to find reconciliation “so that both are simultaneously teachers and students” (1996: 53). In this respect, providing a performance blueprint at the outset of a making process, which student performers are then expected to compliantly follow and enact, offers little in the way of the necessary conditions to shift this relation. It proves more productive for both teacher maker and student performer to engage together from the outset as collaborative problem solvers towards the realisation of live performance. The sense of co-discovery and co-adventure that this demands is indispensable in formulating an educational encounter that incorporates an intermediary critical frame beyond the task of just making and presenting theatre. Within this approach, student performers can then

⁸⁶ Taken from *D’ailleurs Derrida*, a film by Safaa Fathy (1999).

attempt to identify and ultimately interrupt the counterfeit harmony that may exist between their sense of self as subject and the social order in which they operate.

This is a process effectively articulated by McLaren's model for the teacher of critical pedagogy:

it is the necessary task of the liminal servant both to reveal how subjectivity gets constructed and legitimated through dominant pedagogical discourses and to eventually challenge the imaginary relations that students live relative to the symbolic and material conditions of their existence.

(1988: 171)

If PDT making processes can set out to question and ideally interrupt the forces of subjectivation that assume young people's compliance to the all-encompassing demands of consumer culture, it begins to be conceivable to render transparent and creatively subvert the myriad ways in which neoliberalism proceeds: "in zombie-like fashion, to impose its values, social relations, and forms of social death upon all aspects of civic life" (Giroux 2014: 13).

In actualising any kind of rupture between student performers' perception of self as subject and their perceived interrelationship with their own social orders, I have tended to set about in this work exploiting texts from the historical dramatic canon as scalpels ⁸⁷ with which to try to unmask and interrupt the construction and operation of the unresolved institutional forces, ideological codes, practices of representation and subjectivation that are encountered on a day-to-day basis. Theatre and film texts have been mobilised in these works like that which Rancière identifies existing between the ignorant schoolmaster and emancipated novice: "usually in the form of a book or other piece of writing which is alien to both and to which both can refer to verify in common

⁸⁷ There is an intended nuance here of Grotowski's image of the text as a tool for the actor to "learn to use his role as if it were a surgeon's scalpel, to dissect himself" (2002:37).

what the pupil has seen, says and thinks...” (2009: 14-15). Like performance itself, these dramatic texts have become the third thing: “owned by no one, whose meaning is owned by no one, but which subsists between them” (15). Subsequently, each student performer’s mode of engagement with the dramatic text has been liberated from any perceived expectation to embody singular authorial intention; each has been encouraged instead to occupy a space of resistance existing somewhere between original authorial intent and its spectatorial reception.

Micro-opportunities for Resistance

I do have ongoing concern that the job of formulating a radical pedagogy of PDT might be perceived as a futile one - particularly because of the way in which we seem to be increasingly positioned as powerless to neoliberalism’s influence. Tomlin seems to support this when she cites Jameson’s depiction of cultural acts of opposition that are already co-opted into a simulacrum of images without referents, or “an immense and historically original acculturation of the Real” (Jameson 1991:x). As the ‘Real’ becomes increasingly aestheticised, argues Jameson, so “aesthetic production... has become integrated into commodity production generally” (4) and feeds the consumer’s appetite for a “world transformed into sheer images of itself” (18). In this enveloping simulacrum, argues Tomlin: “there is no longer any ‘outside’ position from which to mount any critique as the oppositional act has already been commodified as a consumable image of itself” (2013: 27).

What is perhaps most pertinent here is whether this apparent commodification of oppositional forces entirely subsumes the intent of PDT itself, so already derailing the idea of PDT as a counter-apparatus for radical pedagogy? Have the oppositional foundations of this contemporary theatrical form already become part of a redundant

spectacle that has become entirely disconnected from its once critical intent?⁸⁸ Is critical distance, as Jameson argues, now "abolished in the new space of post-modernism"? (1991: 48). Again, Tomlin certainly seems to think so when she depicts a somewhat bleak picture of contemporary performance practice entailing mass reproduction of vacuous copies of theatrical convention, form and aesthetic that are entirely disconnected from their once underlying political intent that had aimed to scrutinise the foundations of anything that offered a conclusive narrative: "The self-reflexive questions posed by Derrida, it seemed, were no longer being asked, and the initial answers were now accepted as conclusive, reified and in danger of consolidating into a new totalising narrative of their own" (2013: 6).

Indeed, on reflection, the now relatively established conventions of PDT might be considered to have become subsumed by "neo-liberal fetish innovation;" even failure, that mainstay of contemporary performance practice, is: "a necessity in a world without guarantees: in getting comfortable with failure [...] we can also get comfortable with neo-liberalism's other intimate, precarity" (O'Gorman & Werry 2012: 1). It could be argued that the absence of predictability and security often associated with the creative palette of PDT might covertly be preparing student performers for future effective assimilation into a neoliberal frame. To counteract such a cynical prospect, it is necessary to emphasise the micro-opportunities that arise for resistance in post-dramatic making processes within a radical pedagogic approach.

⁸⁸ Amin in *Specters of Capitalism* argues, that post-modernism itself has "run out of gas" and that its successor, neo-modernism deceptively retains some of the major aspects of post-modernism like "doctrinal fragmentation" which are now translated into an expression of the demands of the logic of the current globalized neoliberal stage (1998: 108-109). In a similar vein, Savran, in *The Death of the Avant-garde* argues that, in recent years, we have consequently become witness to processes of the "branding of the avant-garde, the production of the label 'avant-garde' as a kind of registered trademark...[a] collective hallucination, endlessly alluring and prestigious commodity" which would seem to signal a complete reversal of its original meaning (2006: 11).

Giroux specifically argues that there is a pressing need to reinvest in pedagogies that actively promote “poetry, critical learning, or soaring acts of curiosity and imagination” to provide students with opportunities to understand and critically discuss and even re-model on a micro-scale the relations of ideology and power that structure their day to day existence (2014: 35). In pursuing this vision, a radical pedagogy of PDT should set out to avoid vacuous and superficial repetition of elements of form/aesthetic loosely drawn from Lehmann’s depiction of the panorama of PDT; instead reinvesting them with a devotion to meticulously deconstructive tactics that strive to prise apart the intertwined ideological formations of reality that both the text and theatrical frame themselves represent. As previously established, PDT provides a productive space in which to employ deconstructive tactics that set out to undermine all that is constructed because of its incessant interplay with the benchmark of reality that is the present-ness of the performance event itself.

Think of Me Sometime: Opening Moments

Black curtains are wrenched apart as a young man is unexpectedly thrust forward by unseen stagehands, perhaps without choice, into a white, unadorned space that is rapidly illuminated by fluorescent tubes. He finds himself in front of the DSR microphone and, in the permeating silence, there seems to be no option but to speak directly to the spectators assembled in front of him. Naturally, he is prepared for this action, but he must give the impression that he is not, enacting not wanting to participate. He has arrived for the start of the performance but has no prepared words and, without them, he appears peculiarly absent. Standing in front of the microphone, silent, he provides only disappointment to expectation; his resistance to being present serving only to bring his actual presence into even starker focus. However, his

resistance is very quickly subsumed by the powerful legacy of the apparatus of the dramatic theatre which, as he eventually speaks, seems to forcibly envelop him. He subsequently makes an announcement that is minimal and unadorned by gesture. With nothing but remnants of the dramatic paradigm to fall back on, he searches frantically for the required words and eventually succumbs by saying / *Act One* / Despite this initial hiatus, he has begrudgingly given the cue to begin: to commence the firing up of the cogs of the dramatic theatrical machine. With these two simple words, he has provided the vital cue to fire up other machines, which in turn fire up others: the first in an infinite network of signals and live connections that form the infrastructure of this performance. And yet, in this brief, almost overlooked, moment of resistance to the powerful momentum of the theatre machine, he has enacted not wanting to give that cue. Promptly, two hands appear through a gap in the curtain behind him, making a grabbing action like a toddler demanding to be picked up by a parent. Distracted by this disembodied gesture, he moves tentatively towards these insistent hands, grasps them, and is abruptly yanked out of the space through a gap in the curtain and into the dark void of backstage. The action is quick and ruthless. The fluorescent tubes that illuminated his arrival are immediately extinguished and the space, now dark, is left with only the absence of his very abrupt presence.



Figure 33: *Studio, Coleg Ceredigion* (Source: Ashley Wallington)



Figure 34: *Think of Me Sometime* (Source: Keith Morris)

RISING ACTION

It is in PDT's ability to generate productive territory for collaborative and creative acts of resistance that marks its significant potential as a counter-apparatus for radical pedagogy. Particularly where making processes have engaged in the decomposition and decay of dramatic texts, opportunities have arisen to set out to collaboratively critique power relations, interrupt norms of discourse and representation, and potentially reveal "a space for alternative realities to come into view" (Jürs-Munby 2013: 23). Whilst micro-interruption of these processes will not ever structurally change society, young people's participation in these micro acts of defiance surely establishes at least a transitory pocket of resistance that recognises, celebrates and perhaps even bolsters, dissonance and disruption as an integral stage in young people's cognitive development.

I would argue that many of the recalcitrant tactics of PDT making have potential to engage student performers' critical thinking skills, particularly in terms of acquiring and articulating resistance to that which they may have previously perceived only as universally held perceptions of truth. The potential overlaps that have emerged in this project between concepts of radical pedagogy, authenticity and PDT provide productive territory from which to scrutinise the way in which subjects and subjectivities are produced by specific discourses; so theoretically exposing the impact of the prevailing ideologies of the institutions, hierarchical structures and adult expectations within which young people are enforced to operate daily.

As a caveat to this, I should note that it is more than accurate to say that I have always been very keenly attracted to those notions and movements that resist

straightforward acceptance of institutional, cultural and social values and ideas,⁸⁹ and that there are most certainly aspects of my own ‘prime identities’⁹⁰ that make me a candidate for what Giroux would identify as a committed “border crosser” (1991: 51). I am also acutely aware that this has most certainly had a fundamental impact on the specific political direction of this pedagogic practice and that there is always a need to keep this in check by resisting the forceful coercion of its participants into the specific political frameworks that I personally hold dear. I suspect that what is probably noteworthy in all of this is that there is evidence of a productive triangulation in operation between my own on-going resistance to the seeming inescapability of society’s institutions and values, the potentially disruptive nature of PDT making strategies, and the perceived as rebellious opposition of the adolescent. Brook has usefully referred to the latter as the “underlife.” “positive” non-compliant behaviours that lead to actual ideological resistance which, when appropriately harnessed, might then energise the entire political trajectory of a radical pedagogic project (1987: 151).

The Anticipation of Compliance

It is January 2013 and when I bring the text of Chekhov’s *The Seagull* to the first making session for *Think of Me Sometime*, I immediately sense a tangible disappointment from the young ensemble; none of them say anything of it, but their evidently sullen behaviours imply to me their anticipation of an enforced compliance to

⁸⁹ Hardin begins *Opening Spaces: Critical Pedagogy and Resistance Theory in Composition* with a detailed account of the ways in which he found himself aligned with the forces of cultural and social resistance and how this is likely to have impacted upon his own pedagogic practice. He likes to think that this tendency is “more than just egotistical contrarianism, but I suspect there may be a bit of that involved, too” (2001: 2).

⁹⁰ Chang (2008: 96) argues that cultural standards are reflected in what the auto ethnographer values and that this is manifested in personal preference. To begin a self-analysis of those preferences, he asks the researcher to identify their ‘prime identities’ in relation to nationality, language, religion, class, interests, multiple intelligences, profession, gender and sexuality, and race and ethnicity.

Chekhov's text within the lengthy process to come. At no other point within this process does my sense of *I* feel more estranged from their, at this point, seemingly oppositional *They*. A palpable gulf has already emerged between our perceived subjectivities, which seems to partially subside once *I/We* begin to engage in intently disruptive strategies to interrupt the intentions of Chekhov's text. It takes several days, but *I/We* eventually arrive at what feels like a mutual and productive exchange of sensibilities, that can perhaps be at least partially explained by Flavell's depiction of disruption and dissent as the territory of the adolescent - for integral to the adolescent years, he argues, is the process of metacognition, or thinking about thinking (1963: 205). Flavell claims that as the adolescent mind absorbs information through the senses, so it also acquires an acute ability to deduce abstract, seemingly autonomous propositions and interpretations that are frequently and universally stereotyped as mere cognitive dissonance and adolescent rebellion (Garoian 1999: 31). It might well be that the cognitive underpinning that is required to develop critical frames that interrupt constructs of the real and make discernible the categories within which participants of a radical pedagogy find themselves is already there as a resource simply awaiting encouragement, mobilisation and further direction.

But what if, asks Hardin, students are already acculturated into dominant culture by the time they arrive at a critical/radical pedagogic process? (2001: 49). What if that 'underlife' that is planned to be creatively tapped into is already being channelled into challenging the very strategies employed to problematise, critique, subvert and resist? What has become apparent to me in this is the need to ensure that all student performers' creative responses to any deconstructive unmaking/making tactics explored are readily appreciated as viable material; always given fair opportunity for inclusion alongside the encouraged-to-be-resistant authorial voices that will soon operate

alongside each other in the eventual performance work. Allowing and even encouraging resistance-to-resistance fosters a shared appreciation of the potential for a multiplicity of voices and subject positions to exist within a singular creative work. It offers a step towards counteracting the potential dominance of a narrative of radical resistance that might threaten to entirely: “overwhelm any would-be-counter narratives, raising the possibility that the potential radicalism of resistance becomes the new master narrative with its own set of emerging binaries and imperative to totalising all opposition” (Tomlin 2013: 27).

To always ensure critical progression, any sense of the radical - particularly in terms of digging down to the roots of, excavating and exposing 'realities,' and deconstructive analysis - must continue to scrutinise even itself, otherwise it can no longer make any claim to being radical. Any seeming counter-narratives that challenge the over-arching narrative of resistance are to be taken very seriously since, when they are harnessed effectively, they potentially provide a very necessary impetus to ensure conducive developments in both form and content that might resist the formation of any kind of master narrative of resistance, or even of PDT. When Lehmann suggests that the overriding rule of PDT should be “to violate the conventionalized rule” (2006: 89), he implies perhaps that the form and content of the post-dramatic itself should always be put to continual scrutiny to ensure that it does not ever settle into any overarching and subsequently limiting narrative. A readiness to work with, incorporate and synthesise all raw materials devised by student performers perhaps even serves as a kind of litmus test as to whether the teacher maker's own strategies are just another tacit form of banking education, entrenched in specific ideological agendas that already have clearly laid out outcomes of subjectivity in mind.

Non-compliance

It is March 2013 and I/We find ourselves co-authoring responses to the scene in Act Four of *The Seagull* where Nina has returned after many years away and like her, I/We have got nowhere. I/We have arrived at difficult territory and they are looking to me for answers. I need to urgently shift the responsibility back to them and so decide to entrust them completely with the progression of the material, since I reckon that by now they must have a secure grasp of the deconstructive strategies at their disposal. After suggesting several leads to engage more rigorously with the material, I temporarily withdraw my presence to give them the necessary freedom to author alternative and original ideas. I ask them to present the outcomes of their practical investigations; the results of which are all far more abstract and non-linear than I had ever anticipated. I sense, however, one student performer's non-cooperation with the material that manifests itself in her increasing infuriation with the work, which is actively channelled into passive aggressive non-compliance with her peers. When the opportunity arises, I speak privately to her about her response and it becomes evident that this behaviour at least partly derives from her feeling that this work is never going to communicate anything to a spectator and, more crucially in this context, that her voice has not been heard in its making.

Although I share some of her reservations, I need to be proactive and make an immediate decision as to how to progress. So, I ask her to write down her feelings about the work that has emerged - which she agrees to do, but only in her first language, German. She reads it to me. I do not have even rudimentary German, nor do any of the other student performers. When she reads out her self-authored text, I am acutely aware of her shaking hands and the intense frustration that flavours the tone of

her delivery, which is interspliced with decipherable words like / *Post-moderne* / *Postdramatisches* / and / *Scheisse* / I ask her to never translate the full text for any of us and offer her the opportunity to experiment with speaking it directly into a microphone to overlay the rest of the ensemble's previously presented work. When the idea is taken to them, they are keen to give it a go. During the subsequent experiment, she rants into the microphone in antithesis to the very considered tone, pace and rhythm that is evident in the work of her peers, who now must work extremely hard to maintain their focus throughout.

What I think had occurred in this rehearsal moment was that I had managed to encourage her recalcitrance to the very framework of opposition and resistance on which this pedagogic project depends. Consequently, it was to be in the role of continually embodying an oppositional resistance to the ideas and concepts in operation in this work that was to become the *raison d'être* for her entire individual performance. What I think had unravelled in this spontaneous solution was a post-dramatic rendering of Arkadina's rant in Chekhov's original text on the perceived failure of her son's experimental theatre practice. In allowing the ideological framework guiding the performance making to be individually challenged by this student performer, steps had been taken perhaps to resist the danger of any perception of this pedagogic project as a means of ideological or dogmatic disciplining of student performers' minds; providing perhaps some resolution to the ongoing: "problematic paradox of attempting to develop free and critical minds without extensive coercion in instruction" (Mueller 2012: 23).

Resistance

Giroux argues that deliberately incorporating ideas about resistance within pedagogic processes celebrates a dialectical notion of human agency that portrays domination as neither a static process nor one that will ever be complete (2001: 108).

Following Foucault's concept of power as a dynamic process, present in all relations and producing/produced by resistance, this ensures that student performers are not simply positioned as passive in binary opposition⁹¹ to domination. Instead, argues Giroux, it reflects the many complex ways in which young people might have agency in mediating and responding to the interface between their own lived experience and structures of domination and constraint: "[Power] is exercised not only as a means of domination, but also as an act of resistance or even as an expression of a creative mode of cultural and social production outside the immediate force of domination" (Giroux 2001: 108).

When PDT making processes are particularly dissonant and recalcitrant, they have potential to provide young people with an innovative counter-apparatus within which they can author their own acts of creative resistance outside of the usual prescribed and expected hegemonic modes of cultural production; and it is in collaboratively authoring these resistant acts that emerge conditions that might necessitate the development of critical collectivity. Carroll, Jürs-Munby and Giles point out that, according to both Lehmann and Rancière, theatre's "democratic force" is not to be found within: "the harmonious assembly of consent but through practices that make room for disruption or dissent [...], suggesting that the political value of performance is not found in an uncritical 'collectivity.'" In what I interpret as a direct endorsement of PDT as a counter-apparatus for radical pedagogy, they argue that Lehmann views such "guerrilla intervention" as theatre's "best hope of influence on our grasp of reality" - particularly in the face of the enforced superiority structures of the

⁹¹ Elsworth systematically attacks all the assumptions, objectives and practices of critical pedagogy in her article *Why Doesn't This Feel Empowering?* (1989). She focuses on key terminology like 'empowerment,' 'student voice,' and 'dialogue' as simply "repressive myths that perpetuate relations of domination" (298).

mass media (2013: 22) which: “create and disseminate versions of the real that are entirely fabricated, yet indistinguishable from any other ‘reality’” (Tomlin 2013: 1).

In instigating a radical pedagogy of PDT, it is fundamental to not engender the kind of uncritical collectivity that emerges within pedagogic practices in which young people are perceived as mere depositories and the teacher depositor, where: “Instead of communicating, the teacher issues communiqués and makes deposits which the students patiently receive, memorize, and repeat” (Freire 1996: 53). Freire’s depiction of the ‘banking’ concept of education might well be articulating contemporary neoliberal pedagogies that avoid risk, set out to enforce acceptance of power relations at face value and shape docile bodies firmly in line with the specific requirements of market forces.

As a slight tangent here, I can't help but be reminded in this of some of my own early theatre experiences within school, youth theatre and even university where, in retrospect, it was clear that I had no agency whatsoever;⁹² where there was always high expectation to comply to instruction, often with only the merest hint of critical engagement, in what were largely redundant pedagogical processes focusing on little, except maybe responding to instruction and the power of recall. In what I see as its most troublesome manifestation, banking education is often strikingly apparent in the all dancing and singing chorus of children and teenagers in the “ridiculous mass entertainment of the musical” (Lehmann 2006: 180) who perform within strict choreographic patterns usually defined by the adult. Despite often exhibiting a virtuosity in their performances that is swiftly translated by a readily appreciative spectator into terms that are very easily digested (like charisma, skill and commitment),

⁹² I consider agency here to be an individual's potential to affect proceedings and to make significant choices that will affect both the self and their personal relations with others.

these participating children do firmly as they are told, and may in fact do it well – so serving to do little except reinforce the reductive categorisation of children and teenagers as docile, utterly compliant and always operating in relation to adults. This is perhaps one of the reasons that musical theatre continually proves itself to be neoliberalism's ally in every sense.

Freire argues that such debilitating banking modes of education have the capability to “minimize or annul the students’ creative power” (1996: 54) for they ensure that there no longer exists any opportunity to critically consider concepts of reality; for that might mean that the protective hierarchies protecting their oppressors might be revealed for what they are. He instead promotes the development of pedagogies founded in the act of problem solving: “Whereas banking education anaesthetizes and inhibits creative power, problem-solving education involves a constant unveiling of reality. The former attempts to maintain the submersion of consciousness; the latter strives for the emergence of consciousness and critical interventions in reality” (62).

When collaborative problem-solving drives pedagogy, there is potential for its participants to begin to critically perceive the way in which they exist in the world, with which and in which they find themselves: “they come to see the world not as a static reality, but as a reality in process, in transformation” (64). The ethos of problem solving has been increasingly crucial to this work, particularly in creating challenging bespoke tasks for student performers, which are pre-designed with thoroughly deconstructive tactics in mind. For example, in the process for *Music to Be Murdered By* two student performers were asked to document and then use the camera shots employed by Hitchcock in his iconic shower scene from *Psycho* as both a basis for physical choreography and to investigate and deconstruct concepts of truth and reality.

Music to Be Murdered By: The Impossibility of Reality

On the stage floor, marked out in white electrical tape, there is a representation of a small motel bathroom; within which are additionally identified the objects of that room - a toilet, basin, towel rail, bath, shower curtain, shower head and plug hole. There are also to be found on the floor some sixty or so red arrows, each just a few centimetres long which intricately document the camera shots employed in the scene. The two performers enter the space. He holds a minute surveillance camera, the image from which is projected onto the entirety of the wall behind. He intricately reproduces the camera shots of the original film sequence, whilst calling them out loud in an entirely detached manner: */1. Doorway/ 2. Toilet/ 3. Head/ 4. Shut door/ 5. Dressing gown/ 6. Feet/ 7. Shower curtain/* and so on. She steps through the marked-out doorway and, in a similarly automated manner, appears entirely obedient to his instructions by marking through at great speed the required physical positions of Janet Leigh's original choreography. Her reproduction of the camera shots appears only to apply to those parts of her body that feature in close-up on screen; and in what seems like an act of defiance, the remainder of her body outside of the camera's frame always remains entirely disengaged from faithfully portraying the death of Hitchcock's female protagonist. As she follows the spoken instructions from the shooting script, it becomes clear that the choreography required of the rest of her body to achieve the close-ups is impossible to perform and, subsequently, there is much intentionally awkward realignment of her body to ensure that they are produced. In rehearsal, we have explored ways in which the impossibility of performing Hitchcock's intricately prescribed choreography mirrors perhaps a failure of the mirror stage, the enforced fabrication of subjectivities, and the impossibility of objective representations of

reality; particularly when the representation of reality that she strives for here is “without origin or reality: a hyperreal” (Baudrillard 1983: 2).

Rupturing Perception

I have already argued that the intricate web of fictionality/reality that is constantly played out within the fabric of PDT lends itself neatly to the idea of PDT being a mirror image for the mechanisms of the spectacle/simulacrum. It is the role of the radical pedagogue, argues Cho, to render the simulacrum transparent through processes that rupture the students’ own perception of it; to “work against its hubris” and to attempt to separate truth from fiction for: “the simulacrum is arrogant and thrives by drawing lines between those who do and do not share its substance” (2009: 123). For Debord, this act of rupturing is itself a radical act that severs unconditional belief in the spectacle by exposing it as an entirely ideological construction, whilst simultaneously salvaging whatever remnants of the real might remain. In its own ongoing obsession with blurring the boundaries of the real and the fictional, PDT provides a site where processes of constantly “switching between ‘real’ contiguity [...] and ‘staged’ construct” result in a perception that undergoes: “at its own risk - the ‘come and go’ between the perception of structure and the sensorial real” (Lehmann 2006: 103). To support this, employing strategies to engage with intermedial tactics within PDT can aid student performers to make direct and embodied intervention into concepts of the real and the virtual. For example, in *All Straight in a Line or Wild Like Thorns* a student performer was provided with a scene from *Rebel Without a Cause* and tasked with making Natalie Wood her translator, whilst simultaneously performing physical choreography to interrupt and contradict the meaning of the scene that was the focus of the exercise.

All Straight in a Line or Wild Like Thorns: Pam gwnest ti 'na?

/ *Helo Jamie* / her Welsh accent immediately drawing attention to itself in antithesis to the breathy American accents of the projected film / *Hello Jamie* / says the on-screen character, a fraction of a second later. The live performer swings her arms around wildly as she continues to pre-empt Natalie Wood with lines of dialogue in Welsh, giving the impression of the Hollywood actress providing a fluent and competent English translation of the live performer's Welsh text / *Pa mor hir wyt ti di 'nabod Plato?* / *How long have you known Plato?* / The on-stage performer darts to the back wall, touches the projection screen and runs back down to the front of the stage, repeating this action many times whilst continuing her pre-empted translations. She sits briefly in the chair US and, as soon as she arrives, then propels herself out of it and heads DS again / *Byddan nhw'n edrych amdanat ti* / *They'll be looking for you* / She makes the journey again and again, each time increasing the speed of her travelling with the result that each time it is repeated, the accuracy of her negotiation with the chair gets somewhat trickier / *Dyw e ddim yn bwysig iddyn nhw* / *It doesn't matter to them* / Her set physical tasks obstruct and prevent any internal, logical identification that she may have developed in engaging with Woods' on-screen performance / *Dwi jyst yn ddideimlad* / *I'm just numb* / Intermediality operates here in a liminal space somewhere in-between the realities and perceptions of live performer and spectator. Both live and on-screen performers seem somehow elevated from their temporally situated bodies into a further liminal space where the screen and on-stage action collide; the effect is one of resistant assimilation of hybrid bodies, past and present. Again, she swings her arms around wildly / *Mae'n ddrwg gen i, mae'n ddrwg gen i fy mod wedi bod yn gas i ti heddiw, dylet ti ddim credu beth dwi fel pan dwi gyda'r plant arall.* *Does neb yn actio'n ddi-dwyll* / *I'm sorry, I'm sorry that I treated you mean*

today, you shouldn't believe what I'm like with the rest of the other kids. Nobody acts sincere / She arrives centre stage, leaps into the air; her physical exertion now affecting the delivery of the text / *Pam gwnest ti 'na? / Why did you do that? /*

Intermediality

Whilst engaging with intermediality provides a productive means of exploring and rupturing perception of the spectacle/simulacrum, the resultant theatrical encounters between the live and the simulated/mediated have much potential for exploring and experiencing the dynamic interplay between opposing perceptions of reality. In addition, experimenting with a variety of intermedial tactics offers an opportunity to precipitate “the extension, challenge and reconfiguration of the material body and its subjectivity” (Causey 2006: 16). In the interaction narrated above, between a student performer in the here-and-now and an on-screen actor from some sixty years earlier, there are nuances of Baudrillard’s framework for the hyperreal in operation: an interaction with a model of the real, and by association subjectivities, that have no origin.

Through the live intervention of her own body into a mediated real, this student performer effectively resists and subverts the logistical structures embedded within the film excerpt with the result that intermediality emerges as a tangible force, operating: “in-between performer and audience, in-between theatre, performance and other media, in-between realities” (Chapple and Kattenbelt 2006: 12). Her physical interventions serve to problematise the ontology of different perceptions of reality since what occurs here is a “disturbance of the senses” and “a blurring of realities” for both performer and spectator, a stutter in perception between the “fictional and real, physical and virtual, live and pre-recorded” (Nibbelink and Merx 2010: 219) and so on. The difficult task of negotiating and embodying these shifts produces a tangible instability in terms of her

corporeal and mental presence, resulting in her occupation of a dissonant space where, argue Garoian and Gaudelius, “transgressive and transformative representations and interpretations are possible” (2008:38).

In *Music to Be Murdered By* student performers are at times confronted by live feeds of themselves and what emerges here seems, by contrast, to be an entirely nihilistic manifestation of intermediality/subjectivity where: “the presence of the double takes solace through mediated duplication: the simple moment when a live actor confronts her mediated other through technologies of reproduction” (Causey 2006:17). For in enacting a mediated interaction with one’s own self is implied the absolute “nothingness” of subjectivity. As cameras follow them throughout the performance space, the virtuality of their on-screen presence seems to, in effect, transform their live presence into a mere representation of their activity, perhaps even into a dual reality. As they consciously set up and frame their own bodies within live projected camera shots, there emerges a dynamic tension between the self and the performance of that self. As they additionally employ the codes and conventions of Hitchcock’s cinematography to frame their own self-representations, the subsequent interplay between live and mediated action illustrates the potential for the virtual to seem like reality, and vice versa. Intermediality, in effect, becomes a powerful liminal site for the material body’s intervention in technological culture (Garoian 1997: 45).

Additionally, it can of course be argued that engaging with intermedial tactics provides an opportunity for student performers to practice the art of adequately and critically reading media messages to become active participants within democratic society (Kellner & Share 2005: 370). However, one should not underestimate the cynicism many young people already share in relation to constructed media messages. Engaging with intermediality may well aid student performers to discern the nature and

effect of what might otherwise be an invisible media culture, to “critically analyse relationships between media and audiences, information and power” through identifying and criticising stereotypes, dominant values and ideologies and to interpret the multiple meanings and messages generated by media texts (371). Yet many young people are clearly already particularly adept at performing self-representation daily through their engagement with digital and social media. Whether or not engaging with intermedial tactics furthers understanding of constructed media messages, it certainly provides the opportunity for young people to directly intervene in and even shift representations of themselves beyond those frames of childhood “inhabited by the desires, fantasies and interests of the adult world” (Giroux 1998: 24); creating gaps for the exploration of alternative representations of their experiences that are so frequently tied within the mass media to their consumption, possession and embodiment of commodity. Through direct intermedial intervention, theatrical meaning is no longer solely written upon docile bodies; bodies become instead instruments of potentiality with which to initiate subversive processes that can inscribe new meaning.



Figure 35: *Music to Be Murdered By* (Source: Ashley Wallington)

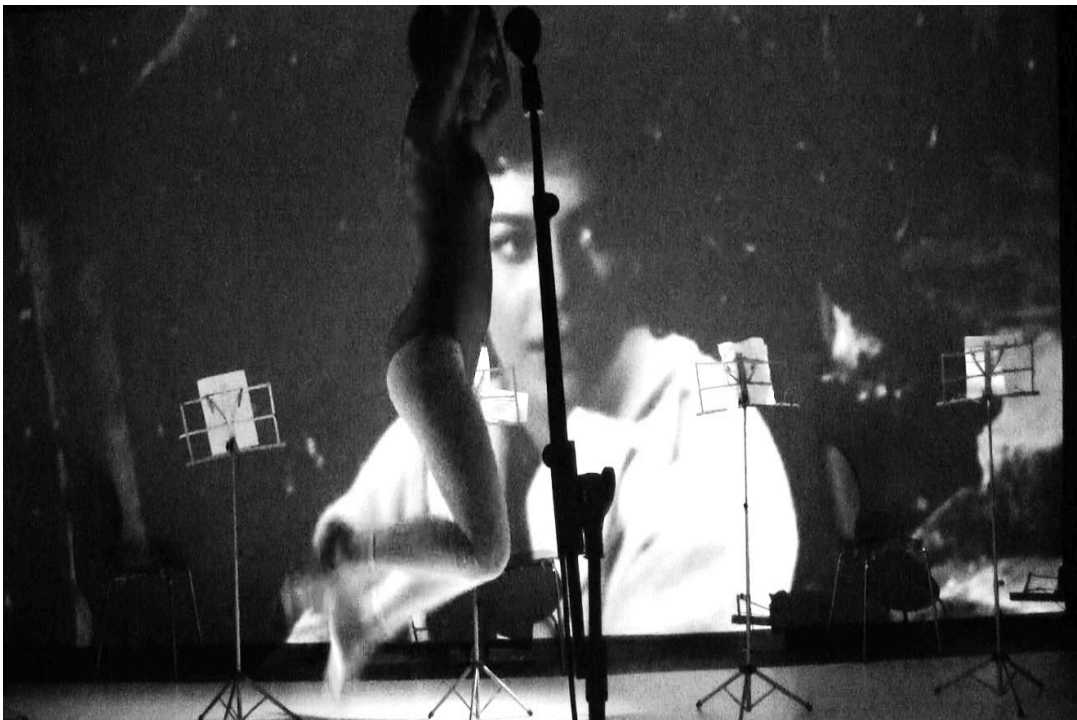


Figure 36: *All Straight in a Line or Wild Like Thorns* (Source: Ashley Wallington)

CLIMAX

Think of Me Sometime: Pre-show Action

A fluorescent tube illuminates a zone on the white floor DSC immediately in front of the first row of spectators. Tentatively, from beneath black drapes, a thin and angular hand emerges, which searches for and eventually rests upon a dishevelled edition of Chekhov's plays. Slowly and very purposefully, the hand slides the book away from the spectators' direct view and into the murky void beneath the black curtains; forcibly removing this integral referent so that it no longer provides security to either student performer or spectator in anchoring or unlocking the meaning of what is to unfold. Silence briefly engulfs the space, except for the distraction of the buzz of lit fluorescent tubes as their current oscillates through them, ionising the inert gas within. As Chekhov's sacred volume is devoured here by the gloomy backstage void, only to be spat out later in its reconstituted fragments, this simple action frames the beginning of the performance and, perhaps predictably, is reversed as the concluding action some hundred minutes later; the physical collection of plays apparently intact despite the frequently ferocious attempts by student performers to annihilate both their form and content.

Appropriation

In each of these works, I/We have persistently appropriated texts from the dramatic canon: "for plagiarism is necessary, progress implies it. It embraces an author's phrase, makes use of his expressions, erases a false idea, and replaces it with the right idea" (Debord 2009: 207).⁹³ Processes of appropriation require the individual

⁹³ Appropriation as a creative process has a legacy that can be traced throughout the Twentieth Century avant-garde – Duchamp's Readymades, Cage's prepared piano, Cunningham's vernacular dance movements, and Kaprow's Happenings were all predicated upon appropriational strategy (Garoian 1999: 19).

to select and employ the materials and objects of the everyday that society accepts at face value and to reuse, reclaim and reframe them within their own shared, dynamic, living codes. The concept provides assured foundations from which to incite resistance since it represents a palpable strategy for young people to synthesise the world around them, to take the materials of everyday use and repurpose them in a way that potentially reflects their own contemporary concerns. Processes that might re-appropriate the logic, form and content originally employed by the primary author of the text to subvert originary intention are neatly encapsulated by Debord and Wolman's notion of *détournement*.⁹⁴ They argue that canonical texts of the past are always to be regarded as: "obstacles, dangerous habits. The point is not whether we like them or not. We have to go beyond them."⁹⁵ The application of *détournement* encourages emergence of new, even contrary meanings that have the potential to entirely subvert the original meaning intended for the text's target audience.

Positioned as agents of *détournement*, student performers become subversive intermediaries in these works by inhabiting a critical space between the primary author's encoding and the spectator's decoding of originary meaning – and their creative work, as the primary readers of the source material, subsequently becomes like a decisive act of aberrant decoding.⁹⁶ In the processes explicated here, the act of appropriating and co-authoring responses to existing dramatic texts establishes

⁹⁴ *Détournement* was a technique developed by the Letterist International and later further developed by the Situationist International. Debord and Wolman published their manifesto in 1956 as *A User's Guide to Détournement* and further explanation is provided within theses 204-209 of Debord's *The Society of The Spectacle* (2009) See: Debord, G., & Wolman, G.J., May 1956. *A User's Guide to Détournement*. [Webpage] Available from: <http://www.cddc.vt.edu/sionline/presitu/usersguide.html> [13 August 2014]

⁹⁵ Debord and Wolman go on to say: "It goes without saying that one is not limited to correcting a work or to integrating diverse fragments of out-of-date works into a new one; one can also alter the meaning of those fragments in any appropriate way, leaving the imbeciles to their slavish preservation of "citations."

⁹⁶ Umberto Eco (1972) employs the term *aberrant decoding* to encapsulate the notion of a text that has been decoded by alternative codes than those utilised to encode them.

conditions that might encourage student performers to “engage in cultural remapping”⁹⁷ as a form of resistance”— so provoking their engagement with crossing borders and providing opportunities to rewrite difference and rethink “the relationship between the center and margins of power as well as between themselves and others” (Giroux 1992: 174).

Whilst cultural remapping is by no means a strategy that results in absolute agency, it certainly encourages a tentative step towards what Foucault implies when he argues for the necessity of “a postulate of absolute optimism” (1991: 174) in working towards specific understandings of the shifting and dynamic interrelationships between power, knowledge and the human subject. When conceptually incorporated into PDT making processes, cultural remapping provides an opportunity for student performers to challenge, remap and renegotiate the master narratives, notions of fixed identity and representations of reality as might be embedded within the appropriated dramatic text. Student performers can identify, experience and additionally embody the limits of discourse identified at work with the dramatic text - which opens doors for direct practical exploration/enactment of the gaps and counter-narratives that are frequently seen as threatening within models of banking education that might seek to secure only hegemonic regimes of truth. So, for example, when a student performer attempts to embody the inconsistencies and impossibilities of performing/maintaining the required camera shots of the shooting script of the shower scene in *Psycho*, she can also set out to explore, experience and embody the inconsistencies and impossibilities of objective representations of reality.

⁹⁷ Cognitive mapping is Jameson’s (1991:5) response to the impossibility of achieving critical distance within the “closed and terrifying machine” and locates the potential for radical opposition within the predicates of the post-modern condition itself, rather than within an ideal of a Utopia found beyond it (Tomlin 2013:31).

To support the de-centering of the dramatic texts employed in these works, student performers were always tasked with re-reading them as “historical and social constructions marked by the weight of inherited and specified meanings” (Giroux 1992: 3). This largely involved exploration of their means of construction, the representational practices at work within them, along with their specific requirements for embodiment within performance. Augmenting a frame that ensures critical distance to the dramatic texts manifests itself here by ensuring that examination of them always took place through the lens of the present; a process that subsequently estranges any notion of originary identity or presumed compliance to the truth-values that might be embedded within them. Bhabha argues that: “restaging the past, introduces incommensurable cultural temporalities into the invention of tradition” (1997:2) and, following this assertion, the corporeal presence of young people’s bodies enacting texts from the historical dramatic canon could be regarded as precisely one of those incommensurable cultural temporalities in action ensuring such estrangement.

When the body of the student performer fails to adequately represent/resist the author's intention, there is immediate opportunity for scrutiny of the gaps and fissures left by the crisis inherent in representational practice as a starting point for creative work; rather than accepting the accidental, unplanned and sometimes excruciating failures that occur in the transmission and reception of representation in young people’s dramatic theatre.⁹⁸ The body of the student performer presents itself with an acute presence that, whilst still riddled with remnants of more conventional representational practice, is largely resistant to it and operates in a critical space between the original

⁹⁸ Kear, in his article *Troublesome Amateurs - Theatre, Ethics and the Labour of Mimesis* identifies the potential failure of mimesis when the spectator witnesses a gap “between intention and achievement, a tear in the fabric of the performance that is usually sutured by the performer's technique” (2005: 40).

intention of the dramatic text and its reception.

Lines of Enquiry

Generic lines of enquiry have levered a radical pedagogy of PDT into action by prising apart the dramatic texts employed at the core of each of the creative processes behind the works referred to here. The first of these enquiries has required identification of distinguishable codes, representations and practices of subjectivation at work in the text(s) that reflect the dominant order. It has then been necessary to examine how the findings from this might be mobilised by student performers to discuss and examine their own existence. From there, I/We have sought out opportunities to reconstruct and reiterate these (often perceived as archaic) codes and practices through subversive acts on the post-dramatic stage. Within this process of reconstruction/reiteration, there has been value in considering whether there is mileage in deconstructing the composition of these codes, representations and practice to the point that I/We can arrive at a sense of how it might be otherwise. For example, the intention of *Music to Be Murdered By* was eventually reflected within two lines of enquiry that were to prove integral to the formulation of both its aesthetic palette and political concerns. These involved exploring the specific techniques of control/power employed by Hitchcock within the selected films and how these potentially reflected the societal controls that we are all subject to. From here, investigations shifted to ways in which I/We could replicate, resist and ultimately subvert the codes and conventions of those films within a post-dramatic space.

Setting up such lines of enquiry at the outset of the making process (and continuing to refine them) ensures a conducive shift in the way in which canonical texts are positioned and valued within these pedagogic processes; they are no longer simply sacred objects to be transmitted at face value and instead become dynamic apparatus to

bring about resistance, dissonance and critical thinking. When Foucault argues: “Since these things...have been made, they can be unmade, as long as we know how it was they were made” (Foucault, cited in Cooper & Blair 2002: 511),⁹⁹ it is in full knowledge of the text’s means of construction and originary intention that I/We can begin employing it as a scalpel to unearth the construction and operation of those institutional forces, ideological codes, and practices of representation that continue to have influence on processes of subjectivation.

The deconstructive elements of this pedagogic process might be thought of as somewhat akin to those stages of “self-reflection, decomposition and separation of the elements of dramatic theatre” that Lehmann identifies when he describes the historic “take off” towards the eventual formation of post-dramatic discourse (2006:48). Once a degree of critical distance to the text in question is attained through application of the lens of the present, then can follow collaborative acts of deconstruction to the original dramaturgy that are inspired by the decomposition and separation of its dramatic elements. Deconstructive strategies encourage an anarchic disturbance and dismantling at the core of the text, a derailing of dominant procedures of representation and subjectivation and a disassembling of notions of unity and hierarchy to begin to celebrate partiality and incompleteness. In practice, these initial processes of *unmaking* can lay the necessary infrastructure for later stages of *making* where the resultant fragments can then be reconstructed and reanimated within new postdramaturgies.

Subjecting the source text(s) to a fairly violent dramaturgical destruction potentially leads to the emergence of what Payley depicts as the “no-space” (1995:10): a disorientating territory where “synthesis is cancelled” and terrain is instead

⁹⁹ Foucault went as far as to suggest that any attempt to change “not only others’ thoughts, but also one’s own” should be regarded as “the intellectual’s *raison d’être*” (Foucault, cited in Kritzman, 1988, 263-264).

established for “an open and fragmenting” rather than “unifying and closed perception” (Lehmann 2006: 82). Such processes of decomposition are never located in a time ‘after’ the authority of the dramatic paradigm in theatre (27), but instead actively engage with the dramatic paradigm in the time ‘now’ of the post-dramatic event to challenge that authority. The concept of drama is subsequently framed as in crisis, as having reached the limitations of its mimetic representation; the fragments of which are then to be later reassembled within postdramaturgies in which “the limbs or branches of a dramatic organism” are positioned “as withered material” (27). The reframing of dramatic texts as historical and social artefacts, to be exploited in exploring questions about reality and fictionality, results in a productive shift away from the limiting expectations of a dramatic paradigm that is often “conscious of nothing outside of itself” (Szondi 1987: 9).

Making Representation Fail

It is February 2013 and I/We are attempting to stage short naturalistic extracts from *The Seagull* with the plan to ultimately fragment them with various tactics of interruption at a later stage. As the work commences, I get a sense of the way in which the proxemics emerging from the extremely limited physical parameters of the studio may have imperceptibly defined the processes employed here. The studio is small, and the necessity of student performer and spectator having always to inhabit the potentially uncomfortable zone of close-up inevitably results in the generation of performance material where, for example, purposeful manipulation of the gaze becomes a fundamental and unavoidable tactic. I/We perhaps have had some recognition, at some point, that any close-up act that was representational in intent would be instantly doomed to failure; for the construction and artificiality of its theatrical representation

would always remains utterly transparent. If representational practice was going to inevitably crumble within the theatrical event anyway, should it not be made to fail with intent? Spectators often know these performers well – many are their friends, siblings and parents – and, however adept the efforts of characterisation, that thing loosely identified as the suspension of disbelief is always difficult, if not largely impossible to attain. A transition must have occurred, at some point, where the focus of making shifted instead to the materiality of the student performer's presence and purposefully inhabiting the in-your-face space resulting from the minimal physical distance to the spectator. The de-representational tactics that have come to be employed within this work tend to focus upon the determined exhaustion and failure of representational practice within the post-dramatic frame, rather than its failure as an accidental and unavoidable side effect of the ever-volatile nature of mimesis. Systems of representation have become instead something to be seized, actively undermined and collaboratively repurposed in the pursuit of alternative means of synthesising reality.

If PDT “no longer represents the world as a surveyable whole” (Jürs-Munby 2006: 12) and offers instead “not a representation but an intentionally unmediated experience of the real (time, space, body)” (Lehmann 2006: 134), what potentially results is a: “kind of loosening of on-stage phenomena from conceptual, referential, representational logics [...] in preference for ‘presentation over representation’” (Jürs-Munby 2013: 11). What has emerged in this work is the simultaneous exploration/operation of both presentation and representation – which, whilst there has certainly been a loosening of the operation of representational logic, does not imply its abandonment. Woolf argues that any attempt to move beyond representation within PDT entails a deep engagement with representation itself (2013: 42) through an examination of the real that works through “embracing, foregrounding, insisting on its

‘aesthetic’ or ‘representational’ status.” This results in what Woolf identifies as PDT’s “double diagnosis” - on one hand retreating from the logic of representation, whilst simultaneously always making transparent the fundamental operation of mimesis and all representational practice. PDT, within the frame of radical pedagogy, promotes its theatricality at the forefront of presentation whilst simultaneously critiquing the representational practices of theatre itself.

Bailes argues that since theatrical representation is always susceptible to all kinds of failure, especially when live, so “it makes sense to withdraw from the kinds of embarrassing disappointment such spectacle can invite and instead find ways to make theatre differently” (2010: xv):

Confronting those practices of representation upon which theatre as a cultural institution is completely founded has hardly weakened the theatrical event, because it undermines the perceived stability of mainstream capitalist ideology’s preferred aspiration to achieve, succeed, or win, and the accumulation of material wealth as proof and effect arranged by those aims. Failure challenges the cultural dominance of instrumental rationality and the fictions of continuity that bind the way we imagine and manufacture the world.

(3)

Determined pedagogic application of failure (especially when it is allied to the mechanisms of theatrical representation) is a strategy, according to Bailes, that potentially “works” (2), “produces” (3) and “opens up a fruitful...ground where subversion and resistance can be tried out or rehearsed” through the production of spaces of resistance¹⁰⁰ which undermine representational practice and the preconceived principles of the theatrical event itself. However, it is worth noting that many of the student performers contributing to these processes have often been deeply uneasy with

¹⁰⁰ Werry & O’Gorman provide an inventory of failure in performance key to which are notions of difference, the inauguration of decay and renewal, productivity, reprieve and success, rebellion against expertise, virtuosity and competence, as caesura, as opening, as point of transformation, as unmaking and remaking selves, the way in which it imperils a subject’s claim to authority, and as a mark of how value is made and measured (2012: 105-110).

such an inversion of understanding of the nature of failure, particularly when it has confronted their own established and often dearly held fictional meta-narratives based on their own personal preconceptions of success. However, the potentially problematic exploration of failure in the context of any pedagogic project at least precipitates an acknowledgement that it is central to all processes of creative experimentation and development.

Think of Me Sometime: An Enactment

From behind the black curtain, a female voice announces a key character's name /Trrrrigggorrrinnnnn/ Her hand emerges clutching a Russian doll painted with the image of a Russian president. It is waved around wildly and then suddenly disappears. Further characters are introduced and, as they become increasingly insignificant within the hierarchical structure of Chekhov's play, so their representative Russian dolls get more minute and the ex-Russian heads of government less identifiable; the final figure of Pauline being so minuscule that her fingers fail to clasp it and it is dropped to the floor. Momentarily there is silence and then, instantaneously, all the Russian dolls are pushed violently into the playing space from beneath the curtain. Silence again. Her hands emerge from beneath the curtain to painstakingly arrange the Russian dolls in order of their seeming importance within the play. An unseen flautist plays from behind the curtain as the Russian dolls are now animated, like chess pieces, in a re-enactment of the plot of Act One of *The Seagull* that is accompanied by fragments of Chekhov's text spoken in English, Welsh and German. The initial enthusiasm of the enactment is gradually replaced by the performer's increasing boredom and disconnection, eventually resulting in inertia as she comes to a complete halt. There is silence. This unassuming act of representing the characters of Chekhov's play through these inanimate representations of ex-Russian presidents serves here to undermine the

constructed artificiality of theatrical characterisation within the dramatic text. Having repeatedly watched this sequence, I find that my own perception shifts back and forth from the fragile and childlike act of constructing make believe, to the physical and aural presence of her hands and voice working hard to animate these inanimate objects. Whilst this performer's gaze is totally obscured from the spectator, she curiously seems both very present and very absent. She does not offer the gesture of looking except through the inanimate Russian dolls and, as Phelan observes "the desire to see the self through the image of the other which all Western representation exploits" (1993: 16) is effectively interrupted resulting in an uneven playing field within which "the degradation of one necessitates the degradation of the other" (17).

Untethering Language

I argued in Part One that as an extension to the critique of representation, strategies are required that disrupt any notion of speech as originary, emphasising it instead as merely another means of representation. In January 2012, in the early stages of making *All Straight in a Line or Wild Like Thorns*, I/We find ourselves attempting to untether both the language and physical action of the original source films from the "absolute form" (Szondi 1987: 9) of drama with all its dependence and over reliance on dialogue and underlying devotion to the Aristotelian unities of time, place and action. This enforced decomposition and estrangement of the film's dramatic elements proves to provide significant interruption to the operation of any singular notion of logos, encouraging an active and collaborative departure from the "classical ordering model of perspective [...] characteristic of drama" (Lehmann 2006: 32). Text is employed against itself, to destroy and undermine itself, creating a rupture in its signifying practices that, per Tomlin, is "part and parcel of its potential duplicity" (2013: 68).

This process of untethering allows us to sever any logical link between the written word and its meaning, and is part of a wider strategy aiming to engage with deconstructive tactics to prise apart texts that are constructed within specific regimes of truth, making transparent their inner contradictions and embedded interrelationships with power. Untethering language from its seemingly rigid contextual restraints begins by collaboratively sifting through the dialogue of the chosen source films according to pre-identified thematic parameters. I/We extract singular words, phrases and sentences from their original contexts and then re-collate them around identified themes like alienation, family, love, rebellion, jargon specific to the decades in which the films were set and quasi-philosophical statements made about the future. What emerges is a series of generally disconnected monologues in which student performers seem to become “speaking machines for some overall intent” (Erickson 2003: 177).

The tactic certainly fosters active disengagement with the hierarchies/logic of the original film texts with the consequence that each student performer becomes a pseudo-expert in four decades of language, phrasing and tonality according to the specific thematic preoccupation that they have been assigned. Within this exercise, student performers are given the opportunity to engage with historically specific cultural codes; reading them critically and objectively, whilst discovering and embodying the very limitations of those codes. A shift occurs from them embodying and accepting those codes at face value, to those codes now becoming forcibly object and other. Once the now isolated and fragmentary statements are forcibly disconnected from the reciprocal context of dialogue, they are then re-employed in direct address to each other at close proximity via microphone which results in an intimate confrontation by a complex series of speech acts.

In doing this, they utilise hundreds of roughly organised phrases that, although

they may have made sense confined to themselves, now make little recognisable meaning in terms of any kind of overall logic or unified narrative. Instead, the listener is at liberty to focus in the immediate space of the speech act on the individual sensations created by each student performer, the fragmented texts becoming “a conduit through which the internal energy and authentic feeling of the performer can be channelled” (Shyer 1989: 91).¹⁰¹ I/We later add (as an after thought) the instantaneous and rolling projection of the spoken text onto the walls of the performance space which serves to further interrupt any distinction between the audible and the written; ultimately undermining any notion that might privilege speech as an authentic conduit to being. Language is presented here as a tangible object, simultaneously separate from and intimately connected to inner motivation. The intended implication of this exploration is that the spoken word always requires the written to function correctly, is always derivative and never actually at all spontaneous.

All Straight in a Line or Wild Like Thorns: A Prophecy

Someway into *All Straight in a Line and Wild Like Thorns*, a female figure emerges from the darkness at a microphone DSC and speaks directly to the spectators sat in front of her / *For many days / end of the earth / Many people will look / notice the star, increasingly bright and increasingly near / the weather will change / The great polar fields of the north and south will rot and divide / Seas will turn warmer / Her*

¹⁰¹ Visiting the Guggenheim’s *Italian Futurism 1909-1944: Reconstructing the Universe* exhibition in February 2014, I became aware of how these strategies for the dislocation of logo centrism have a legacy that can be traced back to Marinetti’s notion of wireless imagination – “The absolute freedom of images or analogies, expressed with disconnected words, and without the connecting syntactical wires and without punctuation” (Marinetti 2009: 147). For Marinetti, the imagination of the poet must “weave together distant things without connecting wires, by means of essential words in freedom” for wireless imagination and words-in-freedom transport us beyond the obsessive and literary “I” (147).

words are projected in intricate synchronisation onto the three white walls surrounding her and onto the white floor beneath her; producing brilliant, rolling, flashes of white light within the dark space. It remains rather ambiguous as to whether she is simply reading these words, or whether they are somehow made manifest, object, through her very articulation / *The last of us / search the heavens and stand amazed / as the stars will still be there, moving through their ancient rhythms / Familiar constellations / Will seem as they have always seen / Eternal / Unchanged / Shortness of time between our planet's birth and its demise* / The sentences and phrases are not authored by her, but have been appropriated from *Rebel Without a Cause* and reassembled to provide a chilling prophecy of contemporary concerns over the future of this planet / *Once you've been up there you know you've been someplace / Do you think the end of the world will come at night-time?* /

Fuchs employs the binary of speech/writing to “glimpse the course of the post-modern tearing at the banks of dramatic form” (1996: 71), linking the resulting theatre of “de-authentication” and its “absencing” of the speaking subject to Derrida’s discussion of presence, a theatre “both after and “after” Derrida” (72). She argues that Derrida’s process of deconstructing all logocentric assumptions opened a theoretical route to a new form of theatre where “old vocabularies of plot and character had lost their interpretative power” (72). The consequence of this, she argues, has been the exposure of textuality behind the phonocentric fabric of performance (1985: 166) resulting in the emergence of textuality as theme, setting and independent constituent:

One might say that we have been witnessing in contemporary theatre, and especially in performance, a representation of the failure of the theatrical enterprise of spontaneous speech with its logocentric claims to origination, authority, authenticity-in short, Presence.

(172)

Throughout *All Straight in a Line or Wild Like Thorns* language is repeatedly

reorganised to find new meaning. Language as a concept is made to fail outright; simultaneously exhausting and being exhausted by its overriding function of representation and instead assuming: “a ‘position’ of tones, words, sentences, sounds that are hardly controlled by a ‘meaning’ but instead by the scenic composition, by a visual, not text orientated dramaturgy” (Lehmann 2006: 146).

The student performers’ delivery of monologues composed entirely from fragments of film dialogue requires a constant and often difficult renegotiation of meaning with the spectator. Whilst the existence of meaning is always implied through the dramatic ritual of directly engaging with the spectator, it never actually quite wholly emerges because of its utter fragmentation. In frantic moments of renegotiation between student performer and spectator, presence and absence struggle to co-exist and in the absence of the ordering unities of action, place and time, language subsequently becomes an “exhibited object” (147), its very artifice and constructed-ness as a system of representation foregrounded.

The act of reading and speaking the written text in performance subsequently becomes an “unnatural, not self-evident process” since the words spoken always remain alien to the speakers and, with the addition of the simultaneous projection of the spoken text, the voice can no longer be read as “coming directly from the soul” (148). The voice of the student performer therefore no longer promises access to the depths of the cohesive subjectivity of an on-stage character, but instead becomes the “basis of an auditive semiotics” (149) where it is “not ‘I’ but ‘it’ that is speaking, namely through/as a complex machinized composition” (149). Accordingly, interconnection between student performer and spectator is forged not through the recognition of any kind of unified character performed according to the play text of the author, but through the immediate sensations created in close proximity by their very present material bodies.

It is February 2013 and, whilst working on *Think of Me Sometime*, I/We have employed an identical strategy to untether language from its contextual constraints, but now with quite different repercussions. I/We have again negotiated specific thematic parameters to aid in the selection of spoken performance texts. In this example, these have included the themes of unrequited love, existential crises, the banality of existence, the seagull as both object and metaphor, acting, youth/age, fame/celebrity, writing and desperation. Once the emerging solo performance texts begin to be orientated within the wider post-dramaturgy, there occurs a frantic wandering of meaning in relation to three immediate coordinates: that which occurs before and after in the post-dramaturgy, the context of the immediate on-stage action, and the student performer's in-the-moment interrelationship with the imagined spectator - a looped genesis of meaning making that results in constantly new and shifting signification.

As weeks of rehearsal go by, however, it becomes clear that student performers have encountered an emotional realism in their spoken monologues that would have worked well in any naturalistic production of Chekhov. This has not emerged from any given circumstances dictated by the playwright, but instead draws upon their own life experiences and biographies. Whilst my own strategies had been designed to forestall and derail conventional meaning making and identification, I had stumbled into an unexpected territory where "pedagogical relations create effects that escape intention" (Martusewicz 2001:6); their own dearly held preconceptions of the nature of acting now resulting in them enacting a performance work of complete fragmentation with archetypal Stanislavskian belief and intent.

It was as if the powerful jaws of the dramatic paradigm could no longer be kept at bay and, when our guard was down, had returned with vengeance by demanding that each student performer seek interiority to forcibly repair and reunify the wreckage that

we had put to work in the post-dramaturgy. Language had very clearly reinstated its old authority in its construction of new, what seemed like unified narratives. In language's desperate bid to fill in and iron out its own gaps and inconsistencies, there had very nearly been a victory for the notion of a unified perception of self as student performers started to give the on-stage impression of having neat and logical inner and outer interconnection. Butler argues that the endless metaphors provided by the spatial distinctions of inner and outer “facilitate and articulate a set of fantasies, feared and desired” (1990:182) – the binary distinction of ‘inner’ and ‘outer’ serving to “stabilise [...] and consolidate [...] the coherent subject” through imposed cultural orders “that sanction the subject and compel its differentiation from the abject” (182). I suspect that what happened here was that unity of the self as subject was both desired and idealised by these student performers. More than ever, it was crucial to continue to employ tactics of interruption in the construction of post-dramaturgy to ensure that this was never quite achieved and always remained instead a dynamic tension within performance.

Untethering Action

It is February 2011 and I/We pay similar attention to fragmenting concepts of unity by detaching selected physical actions and gestures of the source films used in *All Straight in a Line* or *Wild Like Thorns* from their immediate cinematic context. Student performers collate some thirteen actions ¹⁰² from each film which are identified only according to the time code at which they occur and a simple, factual description. After working individually through selected actions from *Rebel Without a Cause*, they return and present their findings. They identify the following to pursue further:

¹⁰² An entirely random number dictated only by its aim to reduce the potential enormity of the task.

<u>Time code</u>	<u>Action</u>
00:02:15	Fall from wall
00:13:23	Punch and kick table
00:19:05	Jump
00:22:35	Group turns
00:22:46	Checks hair
00:30:25	Checks make up in compact
00:50:20	Crosses fingers
00:50:30	Makes signal to start
00:51:14	Group look down from cliff edge
00:52:15	Hands
01:40:22	Pushes dad over
02:07:00	Fires gun
02:08:00	Shoots

Next, they teach each other these actions, which are brought together within sequences of solo choreography that include significant experiments in dynamic variation. I give them time for detailed individual exploration of the innumerable ways of re-performing each action, encouraging experimentation in scale, rhythm, speed, performing the action with and on different parts of the body, using the horizontal plane and variations in levels of energy and commitment.¹⁰³

As I/We work to both expand and consolidate this rudimentary physical vocabulary, their eventual reproduction of some thirty-nine gestures from the four source films results in a dynamic image of performativity in action that becomes simultaneously subverted through each student performer's inevitable variance in their individual iteration of original actions. As I observe them re-perform the actions, I find that my own perception as spectator shifts from an attention to meaning, to focusing instead upon the relational difference in their enactment - particularly when set against the original source films and against each other. Their curious inhabitation of both

¹⁰³ These tasks are loosely based on a workshop by Goat Island narrated by Garoian (1999: 83-97).

plurality and individuality becomes particularly apparent when the cinematic action of the original and the student performer's enactment of it are played out adjacent to one another.

I introduce a further variation to the task that involves student performers teaching their own accumulated choreographic phrases to a partner without using words in their instruction. What I observe in this process is that the subsequent intensity of relation between student performers demands a much more closely observed, sensual, and carefully applied embodiment of each other's physical vocabularies. Once they are conversant and articulate in each other's physical work, they are required to devise and eventually fix down a new sequence of choreography between them. Again, this is to be constructed without using the spoken word and only utilising the physical vocabularies lifted from their own earlier individual responses. The coercion of relation that occurs here ensures that ownership of the original interpretations of physical actions and gestures, performed in relation to specific dynamics, becomes muddled through the conjoining of two sequences of choreography and the inevitable initiation of new physical work as the adhesive that joins them together. Without the use of words to direct each other, it becomes increasingly difficult for either them or myself to identify the precise ownership of the materials that result in new choreographic phrases.

I introduce a final variation to the task that is intended to eventually destabilise/interrupt the very strategies used to evolve this choreography. I ask each pair to produce a score of their new duets that includes all the exact timings between their performance of individual actions, and the length of actions where their performed speed and rhythm has been altered from the original film clip. I set them to editing and re-plotting the original film clips of the actions from the films to these scores to create a highly fragmented and at times repetitive visual and audio accompaniment to their

choreography. When they subsequently perform their choreographic sequences in synchronisation with the now edited film clips, what emerges is the effect of an immense controlling machine of moving image and sound. Within this, the overarching task of the student performer is to keep up with the relentlessness of the now very edited, fragmented and sometimes very repetitive, original.

After many further weeks of rehearsal, their synchronicity with the rapidly moving film edits develops a technical finesse that very obviously exhibits the degree of labour that they have each employed in making this work. As a means of generating the physical choreography for *All Straight in a Line or Wild Like Thorns* the tactic eventually found intention in the creation of dynamic images of purposefully ensnared subjectivities forced to operate within stringent relations of power. As the work developed, discussions centred around how the individual mediation of original action, particularly when it is visually referred to the original, had become a dynamic metaphor for the controlling structures within which young people operate daily and of the gaps that emerge within that for resistance.



Figure 37: *Think of Me Sometime* (Source: Keith Morris)



Figure 38: *Think of Me Sometime* (Source: Keith Morris)

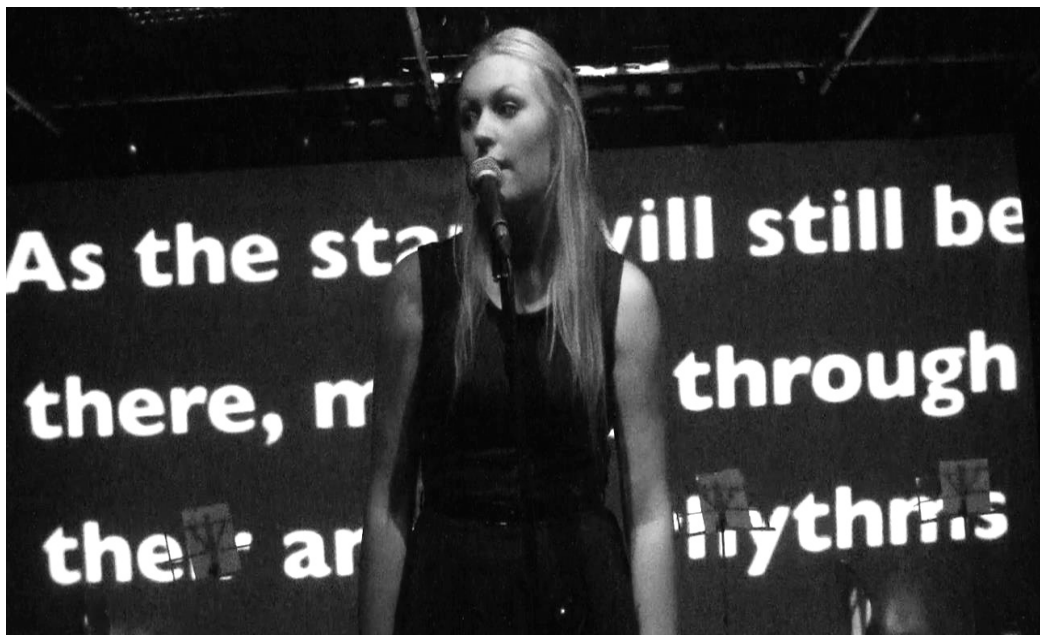


Figure 39: *All Straight in a Line or Wild Like Thorns* (Source: Ashley Wallington)

FALLING ACTION

Authorship

All the processes depicted so far have had considerable impact upon the concept of authorship; its decomposition providing a mirror image of the destruction of fixed notions of subjectivity in pursuit of one that depicts more partial, fluid, interlinked and multiple selves. Portraying processes that have an impact upon authorship within PDT making would not ever be quite complete without ensuring at least some passing reference to Barthes' *The Death of the Author* (1977), in which he maintains that absencing the author transforms the text into "a tissue of citations, resulting from the thousand sources of culture," (4) "nothing deciphered" (5). Subsequently, he argues, responsibility for making meaning shifts from the locus of control as represented by what he refers to as the theological author, to the: "one place where this multiplicity is collected, united [...] the reader [...] the birth of the reader must be ransomed by the death of the Author" (6).

The making processes identified here aim to propel the student performer into the image of Barthes' reader since, in the sheer potential diversity and multiplicity of their individual contributions, responses and interpretations lies the possibility of liberating the meaning of the dramatic text beyond the restrictions of 'theological authorship.' In *What is An Author?* (1987), Foucault argues that it is never quite enough to simply repeat the "empty affirmation that the author has disappeared" but that there is a need to identify instead the space left by the author's disappearance through seeking: "the distribution of gaps and breaches, and watch for the openings [...] this disappearance uncovers" (124). Unfastening singular and originary authorial control encourages an emergence of productive and usually dissonant terrain, within which

student performers can then be supported to author their own responses: incorporating their own readings, experiences and positions within an emerging unbounded inter-text that is brim full of connections, associations, paraphrases and fragments.

This idea of promoting plurality of meaning is perpetuated by Rancière when he embraces the idea that “spectators see, feel and understand something in as much as they compose their own poem” (2009: 14), so investing them with creative interpretative powers that directly mirror the more obviously aligned creative roles within theatrical production. In the processes narrated here, student performers have been orientated as the active, interpretive, primary readers and spectators of the dramatic text and what the eventual spectators of these performance events have come to spectate, it could be argued, are the dynamic processes of spectatorship itself. Within this triangulation of dramatic text, student performer and spectator there potentially occurs a meeting of “unique individual adventures” within which both student performer and spectator are required to acknowledge each other as co-authors in their turn towards “subjectively constructed and contingent meanings that are plural and relative” (Tomlin 2013: 60).

Music to Be Murdered By: Conduit to the Original

Somewhere, late on in *Music to be Murdered By*, a Hitchcock impersonator gives firm instructions to the spectator sat directly in front of him /*Hold the camera and I'll let you know if you're not doing a very good job* / Dutifully, she accepts the camera from him and, with his additional support, frames the two student performers directly in front of her. The image from the camera is projected floor to ceiling on the rear wall. Stage left and right are simultaneously projected the scene from *Psycho* in which Anthony Perkins chats at length with Janet Leigh after her arrival at the motel. It is the

job of these student performers, along with the selected spectator, to simultaneously recreate the camera shots with faithful attention to the detail of the original. He positions himself towards the right of the frame and addresses her off camera / *She had to raise me all by myself after my dad died. I was only five... and it must have been a strain* / They speedily swap places and she replaces him in the frame, taking side-glances to check the accuracy of her performance in relation to the original. I sense many spectators do the same, implicated as conduits to the original through their reception of the live performance of these young peoples' bodies. Spectator ability to shift between the live on-stage performance, the student performers' mediated performance on-screen and the simultaneous filmic original becomes a strategy to deconstruct representations of the real "whilst highlighting its powerful and ideological potential for persuasion" (Tomlin 2013: 96). They rapidly swap places again. He neatly readjusts himself to replicate Perkins' position within the original film / *a few years ago... Mother met a man*/ In a bid to hastily exchange places they leap over each other and, for a second or so at most, she returns to the frame / *He talked her into building this motel* / He returns to the shot and assumes his prior position /*and when... Well... it was just too much for her when he died too... It was too great a shock for her. And the way he died* / She slides back into the shot and, as quickly as she arrives, she leaves as he abruptly replaces her. He laughs and looks down. The selected spectator continues to receive instructions from the Hitchcock impersonator / *You might want to centre that shot up somewhat. You're missing the action. You need to pay more attention to the original* / The student performers constantly alter their positions from close-up, to mid shot, and back again, by constantly readjusting their own physical proximity to the fixed camera. The spectator with camera is implicated here as the nexus between the original and the copy, co-creator/re-creator alongside the two student performers. As

the dialogue progresses, they continue to leap, roll and jump in and out of the shot to maintain to the best of their ability a lucid and faithfully represented mediation of the original. There is no sense of parody here, simply the intention to replicate the original in as intricate detail as is possible. The shot briefly lingers on her. Her arms are crossed. She looks with concern to him / *wouldn't it be better if you put her in... someplace* / He jumps into shot and moves closer to the camera / *You mean an institution?* / The music score begins as the Hitchcock impersonator produces a violin and imitates the original soundtrack to enhance the tension of the scene / *A madhouse? People always call a madhouse "someplace" don't they?* / He mimics her coldly / *Put her in someplace!* / He turns away as if in distaste of the very word. She returns to shot / *Why don't you go away?* / He returns to shot / *To a private island like you?* / She returns to shot as the violin continues to intensify and underscore the tension of the scene / *I didn't mean to seem uncaring* / He abruptly returns to shot. His coldness turns briefly to fury / *What do you mean about caring?*

Passage Through Chaos

Drawing on the image of Deleuze and Guattari's schizo-subject, I/We stand together at the threshold of constructing post-dramaturgy in mirror image of the: "schizophrenic wanderer in the city who thoroughly subverts the orthodoxies of modern consciousness by offering new (flowing, displaced, non-dualistic, non-hierarchical) ways of approaching the world" (Gregory 1994: 152-157). In this moment, it is necessary to confidently inhabit the no-place, knee deep in the self-inflicted destruction and chaos emerging from having deconstructed the dramatic text and the subsequent generation of a multitude of fragmented and disconnected self-authored materials. Having rejected the comfortable frame of ordered telos as was

represented by the source text, I/We now find ourselves in a state of overriding disorder from which it is necessary to seek supportive and collaborative passage through the infinite options and possibilities that lie ahead. Armed only with the detritus of the dramatic text and fragments of self-authored responses to it, the untenanted void of possibility ahead frequently feels like an unsettling one to navigate alone and, subsequently, seeking passage becomes an entirely relational effort aimed at making connection with each other through difference. The prospective task of intricately piecing together post-dramaturgy is subsequently framed as an entrance into a space of potentiality, in which traditional and logical modes of drama no longer necessarily apply; replaced instead by strategies and tactics that promote more lateral and rhizomatic connection - opening up spaces for a multitude of voices, experiences, identities and interpretations to exist alongside one another simultaneously.

Agent of Disorder

It is March 2014 and we are examining the hundred or so fragments of material that have been generated to date whilst working on *Music to Be Murdered By*. Each of the fragments at our disposal feels as if it might contain a dormant energy, a hidden intelligence that when released will fire into action and, if not checked, will frantically seek out unity and interconnection. Any promise that I/We make to exist and operate outside of unity must be continually kept in check - for it is not an easy one to keep. Even at this stage, unity continues to ever seek itself out - offering immediate and seemingly convincing answers to the questions I/We ask of the material. In response, I find myself retreating from my position within the relational I/We to offer incessant interruption to these post-dramaturgical processes. Assuming the role of an agent of disorder, I set out to avert the synthesis that attempts to salvage the detritus of the text; forcibly fracturing all those familiar and logical trains of thought that I/We find

ourselves subconsciously employing to make sense of the unknown.

As I/We work through this process, it becomes clear that one of the most potent tools in the process of constructing post-dramaturgy becomes radical juxtaposition. Foucault explains: “We are all familiar with the disconcerting effect of the proximity of extremes, or, quite simply, with the sudden vicinity of things that have no relation to each other; the mere act of enumeration that heaps them all together has a power of enchantment all of its own” (2002: xvi). The radical juxtaposition of the materials at our disposal seems to enforce the assembly of borderlands that then require intricate navigation by student performers. It provides an opportunity for them to become active border crossers, having to seek interconnection between each other’s materials and subjectivities which might then “allow for the fashioning of new identities within existing configurations of power” (Giroux 1991: 52). Radical juxtaposition, as a key tool for constructing post-dramaturgy, promotes a continual crossing and re-crossing of borders, developing trajectories across delineated space that have potential to further dismantle notions of unity, hierarchy, subjectivity and representation through celebration of multiplicity.

Per Garoian and Gaudelius, juxtaposition creates a disparity that requires immediate reflexivity on behalf of both performer and spectator (2008: 54), enabling something like the actual experience of the everyday in such a way that its “disparate and idiosyncratic fragments resist coalescing into a unifying whole” (63-64). The in-between spaces that emerge in the act of juxtaposition provide a space where knowledge becomes undecidable and mutable, and opportunities arise for creative and political intervention and production (92). These in-between spaces are alluded to by Bhabba (1997: 1) who argues for the need to think beyond narratives of originary subjectivities to focus upon moments or processes that are produced in the articulation

of difference – resulting in the emergence of new spaces that allow for: “elaborating strategies of selfhood [...] that initiate new signs of identity, and innovative sites of collaboration, and contestation, in the act of defining the idea of society itself” (1-2)

Making Interconnection

It is April 2014 and as a strategy to instigate immediate interconnection between accumulated materials, I/We undertake a series of entirely improvised performances that are designed to draw upon and make interconnection between all the fragments of material collated to date. From the first day of making, these fragments have all been intricately documented and collated on individual Post-It notes that now adorn the studio walls and floor. These preliminary improvised encounters are intended to force an in-the-moment interconnection between materials and subjectivities. These improvisational exercises guarantee that all existing materials have potential to be mobilised, in juxtaposition with other materials and without excessive discussion or logical analysis. Within these improvised performances, few of the parameters of a traditional dramatic theatre apply: there is no prescribed sense of beginning or end, nor spectator presence. This is an experiment in which student performers are forcibly required to become active readers and spectators of the materials devised to date, to forge ahead in assembling their own spontaneously constructed cognitive maps to give clues as to how the materials might interconnect within post-dramaturgy.

There are, of course, numerous potential approaches to setting up such an improvisation - I/We try randomly selecting individual Post-It Notes and immediately placing them, without forethought, into a performance timeline that is then immediately performed. Additionally, I/We turn them face down and allow performers to randomly pick them up, one at a time, as the improvisation progresses - so ensuring enforced and unexpected juxtaposition. Whatever the strategy employed for identifying and

mobilising the randomised ordering and placement of materials, the intended outcome is always their chance meeting. When materials do encounter one another for the first time, within the moment of improvisation, their dormant energies are released/exchanged which occasionally results in a surprising synthesis, but more often or not in bold resistance. Sporadically accidental and unplanned meeting points emerge between materials as they are physically overlaid and these subsequently become some of the first fixed points in the timeline of the performance work's post-dramaturgy.

In fully understanding the implications of this improvisational work, theoretical notions of travel and mapping become valuable, particularly as a mirror action to the task of navigating/mapping the complexities of the perceived crisis of fragmented subjectivity within post-modern discourse (Briginshaw 2009: 28). Whilst notions of travel in relation to the individual might have foundations in Enlightenment thinking about the realisation of authentic self, this approach celebrates the partial in the subsequent enactment and embodiment of constantly shifting, perhaps even contradictory subjectivities that are multidirectional, always forming, and never quite becoming.

DÉNOUEMENT

Part One: *Thirteen Theses on PDT* *As an Apparatus for Radical Pedagogy*¹⁰⁴

1

Standing at the intersection of all the tactics of a radical pedagogy of PDT should be the concept of interruption, which should be interpreted in this specific context as a productive act of resistance. There is potential to make use of the many synonyms of interruption – interference, intervention, intrusion, disturbance, rupture and hiatus – as productive means to re-assemble and re-modify what previously existed, to generate new and shifting forms and understandings.

2

PDT has the potential to be mobilised to generate critical frames that make transparent and interrupt constructs of the real, so making discernible the categories within which the participants of a radical pedagogy might find themselves - establishing productive conditions that inspire young people to develop deep and critical understandings of themselves within their own social, cultural and political contexts.

3

In setting out to interrupt concepts of the real, a radical pedagogy of PDT should operate a fervent critique of all truth claims (Kuhn 2009: 23) by instigating processes that make transparent their historical production/construction and the ideological principles

¹⁰⁴ This first text of 'Dénouement' offers a theoretical framework for others to formulate their own approaches to a radical pedagogy of PDT.

operating at their core. This has value in inciting resistance to neoliberalism's powerful and repressive grasp on pedagogic practice and institutions and its role in the manufacture of overly compliant subjectivities that meet the demands of consumer culture.

4

A radical pedagogy of PDT should set out to critique the mechanisms of representational practice - first and foremost through collaborative and critical exploration of the theatre's own representational machinery which should be seized, undermined and collaboratively re-purposed in pursuit of alternative means of synthesising reality.

5

The immediate bodily presence of young performers in PDT has the power to further enhance the superficiality/artificiality of theatre's representational practice – supporting processes that contradict and prise apart representation, heightening its contradictions, cracks and hidden interrelationships with power.

6

A radical pedagogy of PDT should draw upon all the intent and purpose of Derrida's concept of deconstruction as a critical strategy that disturbs and dismantles the foundations of any text that is engaged with; particularly in comprehending its intended meaning, means of construction, and embedded interrelationship with power. It is necessary to avoid the vacuous and superficial repetition of elements of form/aesthetic loosely drawn from Lehmann's depiction of the panorama of PDT, investing them instead with a devotion to meticulously deconstructive tactics that strive to prise apart the intertwined ideological formations of reality that both the text and theatrical frame represent.

7

To extend critique of representational mechanisms, attention is additionally required to identify performance strategies that disrupt any notion of speech being originary; emphasising it/reframing it instead as merely another means of representation. This might manifest itself, for example, in untethering the language of performance texts from the “absolute form” (Szondi 1987: 9) of drama with all its dependence and reliance on dialogue and devotion to time, place and action. Through processes that effectively unmake, deconstruction “becomes the ethical end” since it promotes and values all critical modes of thought and non-closure in a bid to make “ongoing processes of subjectivation visible” (Nicholas 2012: 249).

8

Furthermore, concepts of deconstruction should be extended beyond their Derridean specificities in pursuit of an overarching approach and outlook that provides a guiding ethos for all creative unmaking/making processes. The deconstructive processes inherent to PDT have enormous potential in application within radical pedagogy because of the way in which they might creatively derail dominant procedures of representation and subjectivation; dismantling notions of unity and hierarchy and alternatively celebrating and consolidating partiality and incompleteness.

9

A radical pedagogy of PDT must seize the opportunity to rupture students’ perception of the spectacle and the simulacrum to further engage with, interrupt and critique perceptions of truth and reality. PDT lends itself to the idea of its frame becoming a mirror image of these apparatuses - the blurring of boundaries between the real and the fictional that it provides being at once an effect of and a model for the infrastructure of the spectacle/simulacrum. Employing strategies of intermediality can aid performers in

making direct and embodied intervention into concepts of the real and the virtual, so directly engaging with the idea of the mechanisms of the spectacle/simulacrum.

10

If the post-dramatic subject is to be perceived as a dying one in terms of only ever existing in the ephemeral present and in its unceasing desire for the deconstruction and death of its own fixity, then PDT naturally provides productive terrain in which to encourage a radical critique of concepts of the fixed subject. There is a need to engender resistance to enforced forms of subjectivity that are deemed to be both the effect and instrument of neoliberal power – focusing instead on ways in which individuals might construct their own concepts of self in “an infinite, multiple series of different subjectivities that will never have an end” (Foucault 1994: 276)

11

Such processes should aim to render the concept and illusion of subjectivity in ruins, requiring its reconstruction in more appropriate forms that might more adequately and accurately reflect the complex demands of contemporary existence. A radical pedagogy of PDT should ensure opportunity to creatively and critically intervene in processes of subjectivation. It should offer a productive arena in which alternative, critical and more unorthodox modes of subjectivity can be explored and enacted.

12

A radical pedagogy of PDT should draw upon the frameworks provided by Foucault’s concept of power, particularly in terms of its potential to reveal opportunities for resistance. There might be direct practical intervention into the techniques that facilitate the operation of mechanisms of power, and theatrical exploration/embodiment of the possibilities for resistance that subsequently emerge within those mechanisms.

In further exploring possibilities for inciting resistance, creative processes should draw wherever possible on the myriad images of plurality employed by Deleuze and Guattari to dismantle preconceived constructs of unity, hierarchy, identity, foundation, subjectivity and representation, whilst simultaneously celebrating the counter principles of difference and multiplicity (Deleuze & Guattari 2004: 76).

DÉNOUEMENT

Part Two: *Notes for a Teacher Maker Towards the Realisation of a Radical Pedagogy of PDT*¹⁰⁵

Enact an avid critique of truth.

Expose truth as illusional myth by divulging its construction.

Make critical interventions into reality.

Blur the margins of fact

and fiction,

the real

and unreal.

Seek alternatives to those constructions of the real

that are received through the lens of capitalism

and the knowledge economy.

Sabotage all those mechanisms of the theatre

that attempt to produce an illusion of reality.

Frame fictive illusion within quotation marks.

Create simulations

of the spectacle

to simultaneously legitimise

and delegitimise it.

¹⁰⁵ The final text of 'Dénouement' offers a selection of strategies and tactics that were used in the making of the performance works discussed in Part Three.

Then forcibly sabotage it
and salvage its remnants.
Interrupt and reverse all those conventions of the theatre
that its very existence depends upon.
Employ the theatre curtain
as the beholder of an illusion
that quite simply does not exist.
Betray its function by allowing it to only disappoint,
reversing its usual operation
so its closure becomes a starting point.
Explore traces within dramatic texts of other texts.
Appropriate phrases from within dramatic texts
to speak own personal histories.
Use the text as a scalpel
to unearth the construction
and operation
of those institutional forces,
ideological codes,
practices of representation
and subjectivation
that we are all subject to.
Attempt to reconstruct
and reiterate
these codes and practices

in subversive acts

on the post-dramatic stage.

Observe and record interruptions to your process:

the late arrival,

argument,

missed cue,

moment of hysteria,

lethargy,

irritation,

rage,

absence,

and injury.

Then reconstruct them as

decisive interruptions

to undermine all that has been set up.

When working with film,

switch on the subtitles.

Speak the dialogue simultaneously alongside the on-screen actors,

learning to reproduce their every

cadence and subtlety.

Mute its sound and continue to provide the dialogue with exactness.

Improvise dialogues to dub the now muted on-screen actors.

Mute just occasional words,

replacing them with new words

that shift the entire meaning

of the narrative.

Make direct intervention into film

using green screen technologies.

Reproduce the exact camera work of a film extract,

through exact physical choreography

of bodies in relation to a static camera.

Meet the self within a live feed.

Ask it questions.

Await response.

Allow bodies to gradually become machinised

through their auto responses

and interactions

with original film.

Observe on-screen images become alive

through their reinvestment with the live.

Allow intermediality to function as

a model of interaction

with the real

and subjectivities

that have no origin.

Allow intermediality to function as a tangible force

between performer

and spectator.

In-between realities.

Allow intermediality to blur perception

between fictionality

and reality,

the physical

and virtual,

the live

and pre-recorded.

Occupy the resultant dissonant space

and revel in its awkward liminality.

Dismiss the theatre's representational mechanisms

for their state of disarray,

but continue to engage passionately with them.

Do what you can to rupture the frame of theatre,

revealing the shortcomings

of all the paraphernalia

of its representational practice.

De-represent processes of representation.

Signify the real with all the ambition and skill

of a young child lost in play.

Enact the dramatic text using only found objects as key characters.

Switch the genre of the enactment at a moment's notice.

Interrupt the enactment with laterally related materials

lifted directly from popular culture.

Dub each other.

Speak and perform only stage directions

depicting location and emotion.

Speak and perform only stage directions

depicting action.

Select only one unity as defined by the stage directions to perform.

Play them as orders/commands.

Perform a statistical analysis

of the frequencies of occurrences

within the text of

the pauses, the repetition of specific words, actions, deaths, journeys, distances.

Perform them with all the gusto and commitment

of the traditional dramatic actor.

Read out key monologues

like a horse race commentator into a microphone.

Gradually add other performers who fight over the microphone to be heard.

Perform the impossible act of dying on stage

and inevitably interrupt

the act of dying

with life.

Create the illusion of a fictional character

but be prepared to step out of it

at a moment's notice,

discarding it like a wet raincoat.

Pause till everything is uncomfortable,
making it unclear as to whether this is intentional or not.
Forget what you are doing at a critical moment.
Work with inconsistency and interruption
and see where it takes the work.
Exceed one's own ability to perform quick repetition with accuracy.
Sabotage each others' work.
Exceed own stamina and fitness.
Set up impossible
and overly ambitious sequences of material to perform.
Perform with a total lack of professionalism.
Allow the work to derail itself as it temporarily exhausts its own structure.
Perform acts of self-sabotage.
Fall into private conversation with fellow performers
amidst a scene of enormous emotional power.
Experiment with decay,
lack of productivity,
lack of expertise,
lack of virtuosity,
lack of competence.
And when the theatre becomes compromised by its failure to fully represent,
reveal it
exactly
for

what
it
is.
Exhibit,
expose
and exhaust
all the infrastructures of language.
Treat the text as merely sound object.
Disregard the meaning of language.
Exhaust theatre.
Exhaust language.
Exhaust notions of time and place.
Exhaust representation through language.
Read only words randomly selected off scraps of paper.
Select and read random lines from text at great speed,
searching frantically to make sense of that which is randomly articulated.
Allow fragments of dialogue to overlap,
correspond,
collide
and ultimately fail.
Find ways to eschew ownership of the words that are spoken.
Create physical sign languages
to transmit sentences from the text,
maintaining a logic to its construction.

Speak phrases over and over again

to make them meaningless.

Disengage frequency,

pitch,

timbre

and volume

from meaning making.

Manipulate voices electronically.

Overplay the devices employed by dramatic actors

that convince of the 'real' delivery of dialogue.

Encourage over pronunciation of

hard sounds

and

soft sounds,

and over delivery of the

inherent rhythm

and

musicality

of the text.

Purposefully turn language into an auditory blur.

Devise strategies to employ the spoken text against itself.

Find ways to exhibit language on stage.

Make meaning ambiguous.

Allow language to save itself

for it will,
despite all your efforts,
bring order to the disorder you have created.
Allow emergence of multilingual texts.
Revel in the difficulties arising from not understanding other languages.
Provide incorrect simultaneous translation.
No longer make spoken language an object of exposition.
Write texts that are
antagonistic to the theatre
and write texts
despite the theatre.
Allow writing to become an
entirely fragmented
and
unfinished process.
Write lists and experiment with speaking them,
avoiding declaration of their theme or intent.
Write lists like David Byrne's of
Things to Do
or what it will be like in
The Future.¹⁰⁶
Or lists like Peter Handke's providing

¹⁰⁶ I refer here to David Byrne's *The Knee Plays* (1985), specifically *Knee Play 9: I've Tried (Things to Do)* and *Knee Play 12: In the Future* which were composed for Robert Wilson's opera *the CIVIL wars*.

*Rules for the Actors.*¹⁰⁷

Speak them into a microphone

or speak them into a megaphone.

Speak them into a tape recorder

and play them back.

Encourage open appropriation of material from other performances

and cite sources within the work.

Discover and perform the body's own limitations.

Find strategies to stage the theatre making process itself.

Exhaust popular culture.

Plagiarise each other's efforts.

Surrender own ownership of self-authored materials.

Purposefully include a

shifting array

of

contradictory

authorial voices.

Use the structuring principles

of the original text

to guide the ordering of newly self-authored materials

within the post-dramaturgy.

¹⁰⁷ I refer here to the preface of Peter Handke's *Offending the Audience* in which he outlines seventeen *Rules for the Actors*, directing the performer's attention to the extraordinary beauty of the everyday as can be unearthed through extra-daily attention to sight and sound.

Re-appropriate the logic,

form

and

content

of the original text.

Create secret languages from the detritus of annihilated text

that are separate to the author's original intention.

Compose a relentless

controlling machine

of moving image and sound

to provide an oppressive framework

to perform within.

From the detritus that you now find yourself within,

construct new narratives resisting permanent closure.

Try to revel in

chaos and indecision.

Experiment with the simultaneous presentation of

many actions.

Identify rules.

Then violate those rules.

Play with too much

and too little.

Play with emptiness

and fullness.

Overload the spectator with spectacle.

Interrupt with silence,
slowness,
repetition
and duration.

Allow nothing to happen.

Make the performer absent.

Make the spectator absent.

Make the theatre absent from the event.

Make the event absent from the theatre.

Lay out all the fragments of generated materials before you.

Keep overlapping,
conjoining,
dispersing
and shifting them.

Place fragments in the middle of other fragments
and see what they do.

Introduce new texts
and allow them to
battle for dominance.

Allow lateral connections to emerge between texts.

Allow problems in meaning making to fester.

Purposefully make deciphering difficult.

Cancel synthesis.

Use genre to inappropriately reframe action.

Make meaning purposefully polysemic.

Connect actions with all the logic of dreams.

(Perhaps examine the great works

of the Surrealists,

particularly Magritte)

Replace one detail with another.

Attempt to tolerate disconnectedness.

Compose fields of association.

Give each element within the frame equal importance.

Focus on the minor.

Use whatever mode of performance is necessary to communicate the shared vision.

Employ the principles of

collage

and montage

and the kaleidoscopic

to obstruct dramatic logic.

Apply the polished routine of the presentation of the classics

to performing the detritus you are working with.

Stage the work in a film studio.

Become both actors and technicians

who equally support the

construction and performance of the text.

Allow space for

unknowable moments

and situations.

Allow the lighter shade to have prominence.

Come in

and out

of fictive time.

Allow it to conflict with stage time.

Make stage time

slow down.

Put fictive time

in quotation marks.

Experiment with duration.

Experiment with repetition,

allowing it to interrupt

the emerging structure.

Focus on chance.

Allow space for the unplanned to dictate.

Find alternative ways to represent the ordering principles of time.

Seek joy

in

disorder

and

difference.

Exist in the no-place

with commitment.

Seek passage

through relation.

Relish the unexpected

and
lateral connections
that emerge in the work.
Allow unity to seek itself out.
And, when it appears
(for it inevitably will)
make every attempt to subvert it.
Fracture familiar
and logical
trains of thought.
Set up improvised performances
that juxtapose collated materials.
Find strategies to randomise the selection,
ordering
and
operation of materials.
Continue to fix down accidental meeting points.
A look,
a glance,
a breath.
Allow them to become
initial grid coordinates
around which
post-dramaturgy can then evolve.
Celebrate the partial.

Celebrate the voices of others.

Be always forming

and

never

quite

becoming.

CONCLUSION

This project has fashioned a multi-perspectival enquiry into PDT's potential as a counter-apparatus for radical pedagogy. In doing so, it has i) explored how notions of authenticity might inform the practice of PDT, specifically in application to a range of examples of PDT performed by young people; ii) considered how first-hand spectator accounts of a range of examples of PDT performed by young people might inform the investigation of PDT as an apparatus for radical pedagogy, and iii) asked how PDT might be mobilised as an apparatus for radical pedagogy in practice? These investigations have been addressed through shifting perspectives encompassing scholar, scholar spectator, through to teacher maker – and some of this project's innovation originates from the way in which the resultant authorial voices pursue a rich and varied understanding of the interrelationships between PDT, authenticity and radical pedagogy

whilst simultaneously reflecting the multi-perspectival nature of the contemporary subject.

Concepts of authenticity were examined from the perspective of subjectivities and realities, which acknowledged potentially fruitful points of interconnection between PDT and radical pedagogy. The notion of authenticity was framed as an entirely cultural construct and templates of unified and stable subjectivity were regarded as redundant – subjectivity instead favoured to be understood here as uncertainty, fragmentation, contradiction and unresolvedness because of the way in which this opens up alternative possibilities for the representation of the self within both PDT and radical pedagogic processes. Additionally, concepts of authenticity as it correlates to reality were explored from the perspective of realness, truthfulness and validity as well as simulation, inauthenticity and counterfeitness.

Notions of radical pedagogy drew initially on Freire's concepts of critical pedagogy as a means of uncovering alternative understandings of concepts of reality. The debilitating application of "banking concepts of education" was emphasised, to be replaced instead by processes of "authentic thinking" that might set out to comprehend and critique reality. In addition, this discussion examined post-structural approaches to the politics of knowledge within pedagogy and how these might pose a challenge to the notion of the rational, coherent individual telling rational and coherent stories about themselves (Naughton 2007: 4) – particularly through employing aspects of deconstruction and rhizomatics to pedagogic processes. Finally, I introduced the idea of post-anarchist approaches to pedagogy, particularly those that draw upon post-structural approaches that might support the development of a pedagogic practice that is committed to fostering an autonomous subject.

Having established the critical context of the project, Part One then went on to explore a wide range of intersections emerging between concepts of authenticity and PDT through examination of four specific sites of convergence: realities, bodies, subjectivities and spectatorship. These proved to be prolific in suggesting some of PDT's potential to impose critical frames on reality that might provide the necessary foundations for the operation of a radical pedagogy of PDT. Additionally, exploration of these sites was effective in deepening my own appreciation of PDT's potential to enable an experiential, kinaesthetic and critical mode of being that is able to facilitate immediate and embodied participation in radical pedagogic processes. Furthermore, this discussion clarified and confirmed the importance of concepts of subjectivation and representation as potentially central concerns of a radical pedagogy of PDT.

Part Two subsequently mobilised the findings from the initial discussion of critical context as a frame through which to narrate a series of first-hand spectator accounts of post-dramatic works performed between 2003 to 2014 that had each placed children and teenagers at their core. These accounts had two overriding functions within the structure of the research. Firstly, in terms of deepening my own response to and understanding of how notions of authenticity might inform the practice of PDT in a more subjective and experiential means by locating myself within each work as the spectator having my own "unique individual adventures" (Rancière 2009: 14). This allowed intricate articulation of a more situated and affected response to the research tasks than had perhaps taken place in Part One. This specific mode of narration made particular emphasis of the way in which each of the performance works capitalised on the power relations inherent in the child performer/adult spectator relation, and how many of them subsequently shifted concerns of subjectivity from the young performer on stage, to the adult in the auditorium. The second function of these accounts was to

be able to revisit and pull through some of the intersections emerging in Part One to identify preliminary ideas that could then be taken forward as starting points to mobilise PDT as a counter-apparatus for radical pedagogy in practice.

Part Three applied some of the findings of the project so far to be able to articulate and critically reflect on my own practice over a number of years in the role of teacher maker within the very different context of Coleg Ceredigion, a College of Further Education in Aberystwyth. Taking a perspective now originating from within processes of making performance as opposed to spectating them, this offered access to a first-hand account of elements of process that had led to the manifestation of three performance works made with young people within a radical pedagogic frame. These performance works were not intended as practice-based outputs; instead regarded within the research design as vehicles from which to be able to reflect upon meaningful aspects of process and performance allowing for further scrutiny and expansion of the idea of a radical pedagogy of PDT in practice. In many ways, this provided a unique and distinct insight into creative and critical processes that had been largely absent from Part Two's accounts since these had been narrated more or less entirely from a spectatorial position. The challenge of this section lay in the transferal of seemingly radical ways of thinking and doing that might appear antithetical to the operation, agenda and vision of a contemporary educational institution. It was here that the discussion began to draw more thoroughly on the discourse of radical pedagogy to articulate my own approach, within this specific set of circumstances, to practically realising a radical pedagogy of PDT. Whilst just three performance works were focused on here, there were inevitably others leading up to this and others that followed that

additionally provided crucial groundwork for these approaches.¹⁰⁸ The resultant fabric of Part Three became rather more fragmented than the preceding sections – an amalgamation of narrated moments of rehearsal strategy and interaction, live performance, theoretical perspective and critical commentary in a form that was intended to mirror the rhizomatic approaches to performance making depicted.

In responding to the first research question: *how might notions of authenticity inform the practice of PDT?* various arguments were made that recognised PDT's ability to operate like a live laboratorial experiment that simultaneously engenders and destabilises aspects of its own authentic-ness, present-ness and real-ness. The four points of convergence depicted - realities, bodies, subjectivities and spectators - each offered insight into the modus operandi of PDT and how this might be capitalised on in formulating an approach to a radical pedagogy of PDT.

In relation to *realities*, several aspects emerged by emphasising the convergence of PDT and concepts of authenticity. It became evident that PDT acknowledges and exploits many of the live aspects of the theatrical event, and in doing so manages to inhabit an indeterminate zone somewhere between claims of reality and fictionality. This had several implications for the operation of a radical pedagogy of PDT – it undermines the full possibility of the successful operation of dramatic representation; it opens up an antithetical space between material process/signifier which paves the way for emergence of a distinctly critical lens on the mechanisms of its own representational practice; and the perpetual interplay between reality and fictionality subsequently produces a productive space for operating deconstructive processes because of the

¹⁰⁸ These were: *Savage/Love* (2009), *Offending the Audience* (2010), *Lecti Superessset* (2011), *All Work and No Play* (2015), and *Hamlet* (2017). Later works involved a marked shift in approach – setting out to maintain original texts as whole and unedited unities within the final performances and focusing on intermediality as their core device.

opportunity offered to undermine all that is perceived as ‘constructed’ through the provision of a benchmark of reality that is the present-ness of the performance event itself. These observations were critical in arriving at an overview of PDT’s potential to manufacture its own critical frames on reality that provide foundations for operating a radical pedagogy of PDT aiming to dig down to the roots of the construction of the status quo in a bid to arrive at a more critical and transparent perspective on the operation of reality.

Similarly, the discussion on *bodies* opened up ways in which the postdramatic body, when viewed through the lens of authenticity, becomes an instrument with which to fully explore and, most importantly, embody PDT’s continual movement back and forth between concepts of reality and fictionality. Appreciation of the potential of the student performer’s body to be enabled to access an experiential, kinaesthetic and critical mode of being potentially facilitates very immediate and embodied participation in radical pedagogic processes. The foregrounding of the postdramatic body promotes access to a very specific state of being whereby the student performer can prise apart and inhabit a critical space between the performance material and its reception. Occupation of this resultant dissonant space provides interruption to the processes of reception that might be associated with the dramatic paradigm. It requires urgent negotiation in the moment of performance that promotes both performer and spectator to pursue their own idiosyncratic journeys through, with and against the performance material.

Discussion of *subjectivities* in relation to PDT and concepts of authenticity took the idea of navigating concepts of fictionality and reality - relating this movement to the idea of critiquing and deconstructing concepts of the fixed self, and exploring alternative and perhaps more unorthodox forms of subjectivity within PDT. This was to

become one of the core ambitions of my subsequent approach to a radical pedagogy of PDT. This made emphasis of the way in which PDT focuses on and obsesses over post-structural and post-modern critiques of the fixed self and ways in which exploration of the fragmentation of the subject can be supported through employing intermedial devices.

Consideration of post-dramatic *spectators* through the lens of authenticity also examined the need to negotiate concepts of reality and fictionality – having to exist in a state of constant modification between an acute sense of reality and a sense of the constructed-ness of the event itself. This found emphasis in several of the case studies in Part Two, where there was deliberate suspension of clear lines between reality and fictionality with the intention of provoking the spectator to respond morally to the events occurring in front of them, only to be also undermined for this as the images proceeded to unravel before them. Consideration of the post-dramatic spectator provided further groundwork for articulating the student performer's presence within the performance work made in Part Three – as an individual reader of the performance text who is supported to make intervention into it with their own creative and intellectual ideas.

Revisiting the aesthetic and critical palette of PDT through the lens of authenticity opened up appreciation of PDT as an instrument of deconstructive analysis beyond mere reproduction of its aesthetic/stylistic traits. It revitalised descriptions of PDT to re-capture its acutely deconstructive intent. These portrayals of the ways in which notions of authenticity inform the practice of PDT manifested themselves in the situated spectator accounts of Part Two where the intention was then to specifically explore response to the second research question: *What can spectator accounts of various works of PDT performed by young people offer the investigation of PDT as an*

apparatus for radical pedagogy? In responding to this second enquiry, several features of the works had influence on my formulation of an approach to a radical pedagogy of PDT. For example, their destabilisation of concepts of authentic-ness, real-ness and present-ness - seen, for example, in *üBUNG*'s experiments in temporality; the stutters and slippages in tense in *All That is Wrong*; the blurring of reality and fictionality in *Before Your Very Eyes* and *Airport Kids*; and the constant revealing of constructed-ness in *Once and For All* – found practical realisation in Part Three's experiments in making room for spaces of disruption and dissent; and accessing deconstructive tactics to attempt to prise apart the intertwined ideological formations of reality that both the text and the theatrical frame represent.

Perhaps inevitably, this led to investigations as to how tapping into the idea of the apparatus of the spectacle/simulacrum might reveal the constructed-ness of realities; and how seizing, undermining and repurposing systems of representation might lead to pursuing alternative means of synthesising reality. The purposeful deconstruction of representational mechanisms found particular exemplification in the performance works in the exploitation of children and teenager's bodies as instruments of de-representation. *Teenage Riot* was an example of young people thoroughly seizing, undermining and repurposing systems of representation to present highly selective and mediated images of themselves for the adult spectator's reception. This concern with deconstructing representational practice featured abundantly in my own approach to a radical pedagogy of PDT that set out to identify the gaps and fissures exposed by the limitations of representational practice and to utilise these as starting points for creative work.

Alongside derailing dominant procedures of representation, attention was also paid in the case studies to the way in which the various works undermined processes of

subjectivation. In many cases, this supported the collaborative development of critical frames on constructs of reality – making transparent and interrupting constructs of the real with the ambition of making discernible the social categories within which the performers found themselves inscribed. Many of the case studies contained examples of young people rejecting psychological representations of the subject, in favour of explorations of more alternative and unorthodox forms of subjectivity. This manifested itself in Part Three's attempts to radically critique the notion of the fixed subject by inciting resistance to enforced forms of subjectivity that might be deemed as both the effect and instrument of neoliberal power. Exploration of the fragmented and rhizomatic nature of post-modern identities had been evident in the account of *L'Enfant* and was later demonstrated in practical application of Deleuze and Guattari's images of plurality as a means of dismantling constructs of unity, hierarchy and identity.

In responding to the project's final enquiry – *how might PDT be mobilised as a counter-apparatus for radical pedagogy?* – various interpretations emerged as to how the 'radical' in 'radical pedagogy' might be positioned. At the outset, I had offered a range of definitions of the radical and, in a footnote, expressed my unease over subsequent usage of the term. In an attempt to reclaim its analytical intent and to then confidently re-employ it in this context, I continued to use it as a means of capturing and pursuing an investigative approach that interrogates truth claims to make transparent the processes that govern everyday existence, exposing the superficiality and construction of reality. To clarify this further, I drew upon concepts of deconstruction in terms of how the use of 'radical' might suggest a digging down to the foundations of the operation of contemporary apparatuses, an examination of how the subject is forced into becoming an object of negotiation between them – a subject that is in constant dialogue with them and is subsequently always shifting, transitory and in

a mode of becoming. Within the context of this project, the ‘radical’ aims to depict processes that set out to affect the fundamental nature of things; that depart from tradition in pursuit of the innovative and progressive; that take risks and try new things; that advocate through political and social reform; and that encourage radical thinking – as to how things are interconnected, how things affect one another and why things are like they are.

Making interconnection/intervention within and between contemporary apparatuses subsequently became the *modus operandi* of the participant in this radical pedagogy of PDT. The radical pedagogy of PDT that I depicted in Part Three is one that supports its participants in achieving new understandings of reality by shifting them from object to subject position, drawing upon Giroux’s definition of empowerment as development of a specific ability to think and act critically in order to be able to interrogate and identify previously non-transparent social forms and constructs. This is a radical pedagogy that offers mechanisms for critique that attempt to go beyond the neoliberal idea that the primary objective of pedagogy is economic adeptness.

PDT emerges here as having potential as an innovative counter-apparatus for radical pedagogy because of the way it offers rich terrain for the exploration of processes that might disturb and dismantle the foundations of any performance text that is engaged with in pursuit of generating critical frames on reality. PDT proves to be productive territory within which to engage with, interrupt and critique perceptions of truth and reality. It is an innovative pedagogical arena for embodying the deconstruction of representation and employing thoroughly deconstructive tactics that strive to prise apart the formations of reality that are intertwined within both the performance text and theatrical frame. It provides access to dissonant and recalcitrant making practices that emancipate theatrical discourse from literary discourse, that have

potential to enable participants to co-author acts of creative resistance outside of the usual hegemonic modes of theatrical production that are often prescribed for and expected of young people. PDT offers a creative means to render the concept and illusion of subjectivity in ruins, and locate the subject in a productive and dynamic tension with everyday apparatuses within which an individual can be supported within the pedagogic relation to explore and inhabit rather more unorthodox and substitute forms/means of subjectivity. It becomes a site for dynamic self-creation and experimentation into the possibilities for subjectivity in resistance to the templates of subjectivity that are expected to be inherited and assumed by young people.

There are various possibilities for further development of this work, including: the expansion of Part Two, realigned perhaps to solely emphasise the interrelationship between child performer and adult spectator; further development and articulation of the principles that have emerged here for the operation of a radical pedagogy of PDT, in new situations and contexts including using, modifying and assessing this system of working with different groups beyond children and teenagers; further development of *Thirteen Theses on PDT as a Counter-Apparatus for Radical Pedagogy* and *Notes for a Teacher Maker Towards the Realisation of a Radical Pedagogy of PDT* by offering it to other practitioners to use as a basis for their own radical pedagogic work and examining the results of this; perhaps undertaking more qualitative based research that investigates participant experiences of working within the proposed frameworks for a radical pedagogy of PDT. If there is an overriding limitation to the research design, it lies in the fact that it is my own very specific perspectives that are articulated throughout it, and there may be benefit in pursuing and capturing the insights and experiences of participating student performers which would result in an entirely different narrative.

Towards a Radical Pedagogy of Post-Dramatic Theatre makes its original contribution to knowledge in the way in which it: adopts a multi-perspectival approach to access responses to my research questions; curates a fairly extensive archive of first-person spectator accounts of a decade of post-dramatic work performed by children and teenagers; extends existing understanding of concepts of PDT by making linkage with concepts of authenticity to specifically reveal its potential function as a counter-apparatus for radical pedagogy; the way it draws together the fields of Performance Studies and Pedagogy in extending this debate; the way it extends existing scholarly discussion of examples of PDT performed by children and teenagers to include reflection on what these might offer to the formulation of a radical pedagogy of PDT; and its implementation and reflection on a specific approach to a radical pedagogy of PDT in practice to offer a framework for others to formulate their own radical pedagogic processes.

In many ways, my concern with seeking out PDT's potential as a counter-apparatus for radical pedagogy feels more urgent and relevant than ever. In an era of fake news and post-truth politics, it has become increasingly critical for young people to be armed with the necessary tools to treat all narratives with scepticism, to decipher fact from emotion, and to be able to identify the truths that are often demoted to having lesser importance than popular fiction. Additionally, as Arts education is gradually withdrawn from schools and colleges in favour of curriculum design that is increasingly subjugated to market forces, this project serves as a reminder that the Performing Arts can provide very rich opportunities for developing and embodying very necessary critical, and at times subversive, frames on reality – and conversely, of course, this is precisely the reason that the arts find themselves subjugated within neoliberal culture.

ILLUSTRATIONS

Figure 1, Van der Elst, Kurt. (1997) [Photograph; *Bernadetje*] At:
www.flickr.com/photos/desingel/4799386529

Figure 2, Van der Elst, Kurt. (1997) [Photograph; *Bernadetje*] At:
www.kude.photoshelter.com/image/10000_iwcBZPC7SE

Figure 3, Van der Elst, Kurt. (1997) [Photograph; *Bernadetje*] At:
www.kude.photoshelter.com/image/10000LOQvwZmP8CE

Figure 4, Deprez, Phile. (2001) [Photograph; *üBUNG*] At:
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Figure 5, Deprez, Phile. (2001) [Photograph: *üBUNG*] At:
www.desingel.be/josse-de-pauw-victoria-het-net-ubung

Figure 6, Deprez, Phile. (2001) [Photograph: *üBUNG*] At:
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Figure 7, Protokoll, Rimini. (2008) [Photograph: *Airport Kids*] At:
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Figure 8, Protokoll, Rimini. (2008) [Photograph: *Airport Kids*] At:
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Figure 9, Goed, Ontroerend. (2008) [Photograph: *Once and For All We're Going to Tell You Who We Are So Shut up and Listen*] At:
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Figure 10, Goed, Ontroerend. (2008) [Photograph: *Once and For All We're Going to Tell You Who We Are So Shut up and Listen*] At:
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Figure 11, Goed, Ontroerend. (2008) [Photograph: *Once and For All We're Going to Tell You Who We Are So Shut up and Listen*] At:

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Figure 12, Goed, Ontroerend. (2008) [Photograph: *Once and For All We're Going to Tell You Who We Are So Shut up and Listen*] At:

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Figure 13, Deprez, Phile. (2007) [Photograph: *That Night Follows Day*] At:

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Figure 14, Deprez, Phile. (2007) [Photograph: *That Night Follows Day*] At:

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Figure 15, Deprez, Phile. (2007) [Photograph: *That Night Follows Day*] At:

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Figure 16, Deprez, Phile. (2007) [Photograph: *That Night Follows Day*] At:

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Figure 17, Goed, Ontroerend. (2010) [Photograph: *Teenage Riot*] At: [www.6-](http://www.6-fies.it/2011_drodesera14be/index.html)

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Figure 18, Walker, Sarah. (2010) [Photograph: *Teenage Riot*] At:

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Figure 19, Goed, Ontroerend. (2010) [Photograph: *Teenage Riot*] At:

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Figure 20, Goed, Ontroerend. (2010) [Photograph: *Teenage Riot*] At:

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Figure 21, Reflex, Mamallian Diving. (2009) [Photograph: *Haircuts by Children*] At:

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Figure 22, Launer, John. (2010) [Photograph: *Haircuts by Children*] At:

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Figure 23, Deprez, Phile. (2011) [Photograph: *Before Your Very Eyes*] At: www.gobsquad.com/projects/before-your-very-eyes

Figure 24, Deprez, Phile. (2011) [Photograph: *Before Your Very Eyes*] At: www.gobsquad.com/projects/before-your-very-eyes

Figure 25, Marcus, Joan. (2015) [Photograph: *Before Your Very Eyes*] At: www.villagevoice.com/arts/before-your-very-eyes-gob-squad-toys-with-our-notions-of-growing-old-7835205

Figure 26, Marcus, Joan. (2015) [Photograph: *Before Your Very Eyes*] At: www.newyorkcitytheater.com/theater/matinsonhall/before-your-very-eyes.php

Figure 27, Goed, Ontroerend. (2012) [Photograph: *All That is Wrong*] At: www.artappens.be/en-gb/artist/performance/ontroerend-goed/all-that-is-wrong

Figure 28, Goed, Ontroerend. (2012) [Photograph: *All That is Wrong*] At: www.artappens.be/en-gb/artist/performance/ontroerend-goed/all-that-is-wrong

Figure 29, de la Danse, Musée. (2011) [Photograph: *L'Enfant*] At: www.borischarmatz.org/en/savoir/piece/enfant

Figure 30, de la Danse, Musée. (2011) [Photograph: *L'Enfant*] At: www.borischarmatz.org/en/savoir/piece/enfant

Figure 31, de la Danse, Musée. (2011) [Photograph: *L'Enfant*] At: www.borischarmatz.org/en/savoir/piece/enfant

Figure 32, de la Danse, Musée. (2011) [Photograph: *L'Enfant*] At: www.borischarmatz.org/en/savoir/piece/enfant

Figure 33, Wallington, A (2014) [Photograph: *Studio, Coleg Ceredigion*] Personal Collection

Figure 34, Morris, K (2013) [Photograph: *Think of Me Sometime*] Personal Collection

Figure 35, Wallington, A (2015) [Photograph: *Music to Be Murdered By*] Personal Collection

Figure 36, Wallington, A (2012) [Photograph: *All Straight in a Line or Wild Like Thorns*] Personal Collection

Figure 37, Morris, K (2013) [Photograph: *Think of Me Sometime*] Personal Collection

Figure 38, Morris, K (2013) [Photograph: *Think of Me Sometime*] Personal Collection

Figure 39, Wallington, A (2012) [Photograph: *All Straight in a Line or Wild Like Thorns*] Personal Collection

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